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MINUCIUS FELIX

MINUCIUS FELIX

AND HIS PLACE AMONG THE EARLY FATHERS OF THE LATIN CHURCH

BY THE REV.

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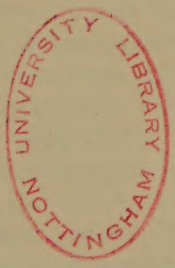

LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NEW YORK AND TORONTO: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
Printed in Great Britain
1928

DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER, MY FIRST TUTOR AND EVER CONSTANT INSPIRER, AT WHOSE WISH THIS WORK WAS UNDERTAKEN, AND BY WHOSE ENCOURAGEMENT IT HAS BEEN COMPLETED

PREFACE

THE present work falls into two divisions, the first consisting of a reasoned introduction to the contents of the dialogue *Octavius* composed by the early Christian apologist Minucius Felix, and the second dealing with the principal elements which bear on the precise place to be assigned to this Father in the development of Latin ecclesiastical literature. It is hoped that a number of points so brought into view will prove of some interest to the general theological reader, that those who are taking Minucius in Divinity courses in universities and colleges will find a useful companion to their studies, and that our patrologists will at least be led to consider afresh whether the author of the *Octavius* has not right to be considered ' primus Latinorum ' in place of Tertullian.

No early Christian writer is so elegant as Minucius Felix, and none exposes so clearly and concisely the fundamental conflict between Christianity and the more serious religious thought of the ancient Roman world, thus providing attractive testimony to conditions in an age of the primitive Church upon which light is particularly valuable.

The text used has been that of the Teubner edition of Waltzing (1912), with references to that of Halm (1867) where divergences in the order of several chapters occur. As the author has been careful to indicate his principal sources the addition of a bibliography seemed unnecessary.

H. J. BAYLIS.

GRAVENHURST, BEDS.
1927.

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MINUCIUS FELIX AND HIS PLACE AMONG THE EARLY FATHERS OF THE LATIN CHURCH

PART I

THE DIALOGUE CALLED 'OCTAVIUS'

CHAPTER I

The 'Octavius' and its Author

The place of Marcus Minucius Felix among the early defenders of the Christian Faith has been preserved for him to posterity by his choice little work the *Octavius*, which enjoys the distinction of being undoubtedly the most ancient Latin Christian dialogue extant, and also, if the deductions to be made later are correct, of being the first contribution to the literature of the Latin Church. Briefly described, the *Octavius* consists of forty short chapters which fall naturally into five divisions, the prologue, a Pagan thesis, an interlude, the Christian antithesis, and the epilogue, being Ciceronian and rhetorical rather than Platonic and conversational in form, but not lacking the marks of substantial reality. Opening the exordium in a manner strongly reminiscent of Cicero's *de Oratore* the author, in true classical vein, proceeds to an exquisitely tender panegyric upon his old friend Octavius Januarius and the felicity of their mutual intercourse. He recalls the days when they had been fellow students, and how he had followed his faithful friend into the Christian fold. But in natural course time had brought separation. Octavius departed, for some distant land it would appear, but when the action of the dialogue opens he has unexpectedly returned to Rome on business at the beginning of the autumn

vacation, that is in late August. After two days spent in the exchange of mutual confidences, the law courts now being closed for two months, Minucius is desirous of enjoying the sea baths at Ostia, a pleasant resort much favoured by the Roman legal world. So the friends set out for a holiday with another companion, a young man named Caecilius Natalis, who appears to have been a law pupil of Minucius. At daybreak the party arrive at the outskirts of the town, when happening to see a statue of Serapis, perhaps adopted in his attribute of healer by the municipality as patron of the place, the young man Caecilius, after the usual manner, throws the image a reverential kiss. Upon this incident rests all that follows. Octavius resents the action and audibly rebukes Minucius for allowing a young man intimately attached to him to remain in the darkness of ignorance, but the matter is not taken up at the moment. Passing through the town the three holiday-makers presently reach the shore and the sea, Octavius the while enlivening the stroll with stories of his travels on the deep. Retracing their steps to where boats had been drawn up, the party for a time watch the frolics of children playing on the beach, but Caecilius shows little interest, standing sulkily and silently apart. Rallied at length by Minucius upon this odd lapse from his usual brightness, the young man blurts out the cause. That aside remark of Octavius had stung him to the quick. Unable now to contain himself any longer he flings a hot challenge to Octavius to prove his insinuation under the strict rules of debate. The opportunity he desires is afforded. Minucius puts the disputants on either side of him, and takes for the judge's seat a position on the stone pier adjoining the baths. Forthwith Caecilius plunges into his brief *contra Christianos*. A bare outline can give no impression of the extreme grace and beauty of the prologue which ends at this point, reminding one, as it does, so forcibly of the opening of Florus in his *Virgilius orator an poeta?* One must go to the text. The second division of the dialogue, cc. v.–xiii., consists of a spirited attack on Christian opinions and mode of life, together with a defence of the old religion. One sees that its form is that

of the speech for the prosecution in a legal exercise, but in its matter Minucius has allowed the case against Christianity to be fairly, fully, and unreservedly given, a fact which renders the *Octavius* unique in early Christian apologetic. The Pagan speaker shows exactly how the educated classes at Rome felt about what they regarded as merely the latest cult from the East. This, then, is of great value in appraising the first difficulties of the Church. When Caecilius has finished there is a break or interlude before the Christian Octavius begins to plead. Minucius relieves the tension by delivering a short discourse from the judicial bench on the necessary distinction between words that trick the mind and those that are positively true. Caecilius, with some justification, complains that the judge is seeking to break the force of his arguments. In this way is cleverly thrown into relief the fourth and most important act of the piece, the Christian speech for the defence, cc. xvi.–xxxviii. The long and eloquent discourse of Octavius refutes his adversary in detail, and supplies on the positive side the doctrines of the Unity of God, of Providence, and of the Resurrection. The voice of the philosopher is heard rather than that of the theologian. This cannot be without design, as will be shown hereinafter. As to the general effect, Minucius himself in the epilogue admires its erudition, its philosophic force, and its winning presentation of the truth. The young Pagan first interrupts the silence which ensues. Minucius will not be obliged to pronounce a verdict. Caecilius enthusiastically confesses himself vanquished. He hails his own victory over his former error, since he admits the main points, the Unity of God, Providence, and the innocence of a sect to which he now attaches himself. Not that he is as yet completely satisfied. As the day is now well advanced he will leave certain points for the morrow. Minucius, for his part, is glad to be relieved of the odium of giving judgment. He believes that Octavius has been divinely inspired. The three friends return in great gladness, and so the book ends.

One admires the art of this dialogue. The author knew his public well. Christian apologies could not have been

very attractive as a rule, but Minucius obviously meant his own little work to be read. He charms his readers with a romantic opening, and before they realise the fact they are spectators of the grandest dramatic situation that can appear on the human stage, the conflict between two hypotheses of life founded upon diametrically opposite conceptions of God and the world. This is no theme for the conversational manner, as Socrates would have discussed it, but for the deep gravity of uninterrupted discourse after the school of Cicero. But there is no need to believe that the circumstances of the *Octavius* are merely the creation of literary adroitness, that the dialogue is fictitious and the personages symbolical. The intimate details of the prologue with their naturalness suggest that the ' actio ' and ' responsio ' are the ordered form of a veritable discussion which took place on the mole at Ostia one late August day when the Christian Church was very young.

We can only marvel, after a perusal of the *Octavius*, that more decided traces of its influence are not found in early Latin Christian literature. It is possible that the author, who surely has written less than any Latin writer of his ability, had no further object in view than the circulation of his composition within a restricted literary circle at Rome, or that if the book were designed to obtain a wider notice it was early overshadowed by the more energetic and popular *Apologeticus* of Tertullian. In some respects the *Octavius* resembles the *Epistola ad Diognetum* which long lay hidden in even a darker obscurity, the name of its author unknown unless it be one Ambrosius, its text dependent upon the copy of one manuscript, its date perhaps contemporaneous with that of the *Octavius* and like it variously put between the reign of M. Aurelius and two succeeding centuries, unseen in the brilliance that surrounds Justin M., and yet in itself standing out from the mass of Greek apologetic literature as one of the most dignified, eloquent, and finished writings of ancient times. The vagaries of fortune in the literary world are too proverbial to admit a more than passing surprise at the silence of the early Church upon the *Octavius*, a silence which is only broken by

Lactantius, and after him by Jerome. The former brings us to the early fourth century where the 'Christian Cicero,' as he has been called, in his greatest work the *Divinae Institutiones* (V. i. 21) is speaking somewhat harshly of his predecessors. They had, he says, not been suitable heralds of the truth and those who had been literary men had not been sufficient in its defence. Minucius, however, is singled out for some praise: 'Minucius Felix . . . . Huius liber, cui Octavio titulus est, declarat quam idoneus veritatis adsertor esse potuisset, si se totum ad id studium contulisset.'

Jerome the better part of a century later has read and admired Minucius as a writer but knows no more of him than he was able to gather from Lactantius. Of our author he says 'quid gentilium scripturarum dimisit intactum?' (*Ep.* lxx. 5); 'qui si flumen eloquentiae et concinnas declamationis desiderant, legant Tullium . . . et, ut ad nostros veniam, Tertullianum, Cyprianum, Minucium . . .' (*Comm. in Is. Proph.* 8, praef.). At least another generation of silence succeeds until Eucherius who had been a monk and was bishop of Lyons *c.* 424 eulogises the eloquence of Minucius: 'et quando clarissimos facundia, Firmianum, Minucium, Cyprianum . . . ex illo volumine numerositatis evolvam?' (*Ep. paraen. ad Val. cog.*).

From the middle of the fifth century onwards until the sixteenth the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix received no further notice, its individuality having been finally lost in its annexation to the *adversus Gentes* of Arnobius as a 'liber octavus,' the unique ninth-century manuscript of which is the only authority for its text. In 1543 the 'editio princeps' of Arnobius was published in Rome, and in 1560 the first separate printed copy of the *Octavius* was published at Heidelberg by the French jurist Francis Baudouin, to whom belongs the credit of rescuing Minucius from the oblivion of over a thousand years. The learned Dissertatio prefixed by Baudouin to his edition has been reprinted several times, and may be seen in the Cambridge edition of Holden (1853). In it are given the discoverer's reasons for the identification of the author, together with other relevant matter, and by it Baudouin initiated a

copious stream of Minucian literature which has more than compensated for the long neglect from which Minucius had suffered. During this period the more the *Octavius* has been read the better has it been appreciated.

Critics like the late Provost Salmon and Monceaux found the dialogue an engaging work, while Harnack describes it as ' elegant.' Halm, who edited the text for the Vienna *Corpus*, entitles the *Octavius* ' the little book of gold,' Renan enthusiastically calls it the ' pearl ' of the Aurelian apologetic, and Boissier reckons it to be one of the masterpieces of early Christian literature. The works of the scholars mentioned will come up for notice later as they bear on various points. Doubtless one of the charms of the *Octavius* springs from its human side, from the reader's feeling that here is a fragment of the history of the early Church. Let us therefore try to draw the characters of the men who speak, Caecilius Natalis the Pagan, Octavius Januarius the Christian, and the author himself, Marcus Minucius Felix, as they are brought before us.

The full name of the first of these personages is Q. (Quintus) Caecilius Natalis according to an emendation by Bährens of i. 5. Minucius has, in a masterly manner, by a few strokes here and there, built up a vivid outline of his personality. Whatever the amount of revision to which the author may have subjected his first draft, what there is about Caecilius as a character retains all the freshness of the original notes, for he has life, and more life than the individuals who figure in Plato and Cicero. By nationality he was an African, like Fronto the famous orator, a citizen of Cirta (ix. 6 ; xxxi. 2), the capital of the Roman province of Numidia, now Constantine in the French colony of Algeria. The old Roman gens Caecilia was widely spread in this province, and was domiciled at Cirta, as inscriptions of the time of Caracalla show. Cyprian belonged to this family, and so did Caecilian, bishop of Carthage, whose election led to the Donatist schism. In fact, all the names in the dialogue were common enough in Africa, and are frequently met with in its literature and epigraphy. As for the position which Caecilius occupied, he was the inseparable

companion, both at home and abroad, one may say in family and Forum, of Minucius upon whom a certain measure of responsibility rested (iii. 1). Lactantius may be bearing witness to some tradition when he says that Minucius was not unrenowned among Roman barristers (*D.I.* V. i. 21), and to him Caecilius might have been sent to learn law and rhetoric in the same way as Cicero in his youth attended Q. Mucius Scaevola. That Caecilius was young is borne out by the novelty that marks his impressions, his self-confidence and dogmatic assurance, his anxiety to display his learning, and the quick warmth of his feeling. He is full of 'alacritas,' and there is always 'oculorum et in seriis hilaritas' (*Oct.* iv. 2), a high-spirited young man with a keen sense of humour, but old enough to be on equal terms with his companions whom he calls 'Octavius noster' (iv. 3), and 'Marcus frater' (v. 1), and to adjure Minucius that the latter must set aside all Christian bias in his office as umpire (v. 1). The aside remark made by Octavius was not perhaps intended to be overheard by Caecilius, but his quick ear caught what was more offensive to him in manner than in matter. Probably it was no part of Minucius' obligations to interfere with the liberty of his pupil as regards religious matters. Octavius evidently considers that it is high time the tutor took the young man in hand on this vital point. Caecilius was at the lowest estimate conventionally pious, and despite what he says later, had sufficient belief in the gods to salute Serapis in the presence of Christian friends, whose companionship he could hardly have endured had he been an example of the young man of the world who thinks it rather clever to assume a certain bohemianism and detachment amid the solemn sanctions of society. For some time Caecilius is too acutely wounded to speak. His habitual gaiety has vanished like magic. While the beach is ringing with the laughter and the shouts of children Caecilius stands looking in another direction, 'tacens, anxius, segregatus dolere nescio quid vultu fatebatur' (iv. 1). No sooner is he addressed than the pent-up torrent flows forth. It is the oblique charge of 'inscientia' on his part that rankles deeply, 'me angit et remordet.'

Defiantly he cries that Octavius will find it easier to dispute 'in contubernalibus' than 'conserere sapientiam.' He takes command of the situation. 'We shall sit down here on the breakwater, and settle the matter quietly.' Immediately he commences an oration as if he were briefed for an actual case in court. No doubt he had often indulged in such exercises, for odd as it may seem to us, lawyers of that time found it amusing when they had nothing else to do. He conducts his own side after the usual fashion, opening with studied calmness, but anon passing into scornful indignation rising even to menace, and relapsing into sarcasm. He closes with smiling triumph, and then proceeds to taunt the opposing counsel. He questions whether Octavius will be able to reply, for what is he, after all? Only (as the proverbial expression went) a 'homo Plautinae prosapiae,' a yapping lawyer. He is a foremost man, perhaps, in his own way, as a Christian, amongst the lowest of the low, but certainly not with philosophers, for he is at the very fag end of them. During the pause Caecilius is closely watchful of the judge. When he suspects a trace of partiality in his remarks as it were by the way, he quickly demands that Octavius shall not be let off lightly: he shall refute, if he can, 'singula,' every point. The requisition is fully complied with. Octavius shatters his opponent's case. And now other traits of Caecilius come out. Impulsively he yields ungrudging praise and confesses defeat. More, he has even now joined the sect he had attacked. Yet he remains cautious. Some complementary points need to be cleared up, but can be postponed.

Caecilius, therefore, is drawn by Minucius with sufficient attention to probability in a setting which, from its friendly atmosphere, is in itself natural. He is not unlikeable. Caecilius is conceited, susceptible, quick-tempered, inclined to be somewhat hectoring and even waspish, self-confident and intolerant by turns, it is true, but we must set against that his obvious warmth of character when he is touched, his generosity in defeat, his frank and open mind. After all we expect to find much the same mixture in the composition of any normal young man. We said that Caecilius

was an African. Who can fail to perceive in him the psychology of a southern race? The literature of his country is full of examples like him, of men who spoke the Roman tongue with an exuberance and expression tinged by the glow of a warmer clime. Whatever view we adopt of other characteristics of his personality we must share with Minucius his unstinted admiration of the ability exhibited in an 'oratio' so full of 'subtilis varietas' as that of his pupil.

Caecilius soon proves that the 'imperitiae vulgaris caecitas' (iii. 1), in which Octavius considered him to be involved, was no 'inscientia.' He has had a comprehensive if not thorough grounding in the main principles of philosophic speculation, and he can argue quite in the manner of those professors of rhetoric who declaim, as Minucius justly observes, with a 'mira subtilitas quae nonnumquam ubertate dicendi fidem confessae probationis imitetur' (xiv. 7), and so confuse the minds of the simple. Not that Caecilius has deliberately employed the usual artifices of the courts with any ulterior purpose. Octavius disclaims belief in any such intention: 'Sed in Natali meo versutiam nolo, non credo: procul est ab eius simplicitate subtilis urbanitas' (xvi. 2). Crafty finesse was far from his candid disposition.

Notwithstanding all that has been said Minucius must have intended Caecilius to stand also in a representative sense for the best of the Roman youth which was not in his view wholly irreconcilable in its attitude towards Christianity. Perhaps he had in mind Cotta of Cicero's *de Natura Deorum* although Caecilius shares also the rôle of Velleius. Octavius has much in common with Balbus, and the general likeness in ensemble between the two dialogues may not have been without the design of showing the educated classes at Rome that Cicero or Cotta in the character of Caecilius might have been converted by Octavius had he lived in those days. However that may be, Caecilius is no mere echo of Cotta. He is a young man of the capital like many of the refined middle class of to-day, with a scepticism more affected than real, priding themselves upon an intellectual detachment from the conventional and

commonplace opinions of the masses, and yet at bottom truly conservative by tradition.

It only remains to allude to a wild suggestion of Dessau.[1] This is no less than to identify the Caecilius Natalis of the dialogue with the Natalius, Bishop of the Theodotian sect, of whom Eusebius gives an account (*H.E.* v. 28). The Cirtensian magistrate who gave lavish heathen festivals according to the inscriptions (A.D. 210 to 212) afterwards went to Rome and joined the sect of the Theodotians to which Minucius and Octavius belonged. He became the Confessor Natalius and the dialogue, written partly in his honour, commemorates not only his conversion but also his inviolability before the heathen judges (see xxxvii. 1). This is part of a larger argument of Dessau which we shall examine later. Suffice it here to say that the wavering and needy Natalius, who recanted his heresy after supernatural chastisements and with difficulty persuaded Pope Zephyrinus to receive him back to communion, can only be thought by a too great stretch of the imagination to have ever been the opulent magistrate of Cirta and the keen young probationer of Minucius.

By tacit consent the Christian views of Minucius are regarded as coincident with those expressed in the long speech of Octavius, and quite naturally so, but the latter is far more than one who speaks the mind and message of the author, since not only would it have been quite unnecessary to simulate a fictitious friendship as the *raison d'être* of an apology, but also there can be no doubt that the portrait of Octavius has been outlined by one whose words were inspired by vivid experience and glowing memory. The Introduction provides us with some particulars of a classical friendship of an ardent and unusually intimate kind. Minucius says that Octavius had been the best and truest of comrades, that his deep regard for him had the power of enduing the past with the warmth of the living present; and so fully reciprocal was this feeling that in every mood grave or gay, in actual will itself, the two were in such

[1] H. Dessau: 'Min. Fel. und Caec. Nat.,' *Hermes* 40 (1905), pp. 373–386.

perfect agreement that they might have been said to possess but one soul between them. This excellent and most trustworthy man was his one and only bosom friend,[1] the only one who had shared his former religious errors, who did not break his friendship when he became a Christian but merely went before into the true philosophy. Octavius Januarius was at the time of the dialogue resident some distance from Rome, probably across the sea in northern Africa, and perhaps in legal practice at Cirta. We note in him the dignified calm of an older man, but he too shares the provincial temperament. Upon his meeting his old friend in Rome once more he cannot refrain from dilating on the domestic felicities of his home life, and the words which doubtless fell from the proud father's lips paint one of the most charming little pictures of childhood (ii. 1). Possibly the business which has severed him from such a happy circle is some provincial matter which must be referred to the courts in the capital where he and Minucius had practised in their earlier days both before and after conversion. We have (*Oct.* c. xxviii) an account of the attitude shared by both these advocates in their pre-Christian activities in Rome. They had been thorough-going heathens, believing all the scandals about the Christians without a shred of evidence in fact. While undertaking the legal defence of persons who had actually committed the most horrible crimes both Minucius and Octavius had also conducted the case for the prosecution of Christians, a feature of which had been torture with the object of compelling recantation. Octavius attributes all this early behaviour to demoniac influence. One is led to wonder how far the reception of Christianity by an advocate affected his practice. Presumably the legal mind permitted compliance under certain circumstances by means of the saving clause of mental reservation. But we may conclude that Minucius and Octavius had climbed to some prominence in forensic circles

[1] *Oct.* i. 4: 'Sic solus in amoribus conscius, ipse socius in erroribus.' The 'amores' most naturally mean 'affections' but may be taken as equivalent to 'tastes,' and, less probably, to 'love affairs.' The 'errores' could not be rendered 'peccadilloes,' however attractive the idea of crediting Min. with a reminiscence of youthful lapses from propriety.

at Rome, and were, as we should say, leading counsel. In the Christian society either at Rome or in Africa Octavius had acquired a foremost position. It matters not whether the gibe of Caecilius is read (with Halm after Stieber) 'Christianorum praecipuus' or 'ictorum (iurisconsultorum) praecipuus,' or 'istorum praecipuus,' or, as the unique MS. reads, 'pistorum praecipuus' (xiv. 1), the second term remains, while the sense naturally requires something synonymous, not with 'lawyers,' or 'cynics,' but with 'Christians' to qualify it. This Christian advocate is a true missionary, possessing that alert zeal which instantly perceives an opening. As St. Paul viewing the religious monuments at Athens espied the altar to a god unknown, and upon the circumstance based an appeal to the people to worship the one true God until then unknown to them, so Octavius, observing the homage of his friend to Serapis, issues an immediate challenge. Then wisely leaving the matter where it stood for the opportune moment to ripen, with as it were a Celtic versatility, he becomes the ready raconteur. And, when the time comes for him to speak, he betrays no resentment for the taunts and avoids all personalities. In criticising his opponent's argument he goes to the root when he says that its perplexities arise from lack of a fixed principle, yet by tactful courtesy he removes the sting. From the main body of his discourse nothing can be safely deduced of a characteristic nature, owing to the very large use of conventional apologetic material, but enough has already been gleaned to sketch the outlines of an interesting figure of the early Church.

Marcus Minucius Felix has with his usual literary taste subordinated himself to the exigencies of his work. Of himself he informs us little and beyond his own words we have no further knowledge. The question of his nationality is the first that presents itself. Could he have been a Roman? The answer has been given in the affirmative. Minucius Felix according to this view was a Roman and supremely a Roman. He was deeply attached to Cicero and Virgil and to the ancestral glories of the Roman fatherland. In this respect he differs sharply from Tertullian who was a

Christian above all: Christ with the latter must triumph and the splendour of Rome must perish.[1] On the other hand, despite the close relationship of Minucius with classical culture, considerations of style have been urged to show that he was a provincial and in fact a native of Africa. But two facts have emerged from the discussions on so-called Africanisms in style: the first that expressions held to be Semitisms, Punisms, and Hebraisms are in Minucius only of small extent; and the second that there is no proof that there ever existed an African dialect as such.[2] We see that Minucius as a writer is a clear example of the archaistic trend named after Fronto.[3] Then was Minucius indeed a Roman?

If one judged by modern experience one might believe that some freakish whim had allowed him to indulge in unforgivable insults upon the land of his birth. But a highly bred Roman gentleman under the Empire could hardly bring himself so to outrage even conventional patriotism as to assert, as Minucius does (xxv.), that the Roman power first grew from the association of a band of cut-throats under the leadership of Romulus, himself a fratricide, the violator of the most sacred sanctions of humanity, who obtained territorial aggrandisement by means of wholesale robbery and sacrilege. For, of course, the diatribe of Octavius represents exactly the view of Minucius himself. The same, and more, is read in Tertullian, but he is not of Rome but of Carthage. The indication, then, would be that Minucius also was an African, which is borne out by a number of considerations, not singly sufficient, but together amounting practically to proof. The earliest literary ecclesiastical tradition, which is found in the catalogues of Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* V. i. 22, 23) and of Jerome (*Ep.* lxx. 5), normally associates Minucius with the African writers Tertullian, Cyprian and Arnobius. Latin Christian Africa furnished the most important as well as the fullest contribution to the Latin Church. In addition

[1] Cf. O. Bottero in *Rivista filosofica* 1904, art. 'L'Oct. di Min. Fel.'
[2] W. Kroll, *Rhein. Mus.* 52, 1897.
[3] L. Dalmasso, *Riv. di filol. class.* 1909, fasc. 1, pp. 7–37.

to those mentioned Lactantius himself was an African and could scarcely imply as he does that Minucius belonged to the African group unless he was sure of so much at least. Manuscript tradition adds its support. Why did the copyist of the ninth century place the *Octavius* after the *adversus Gentes* of Arnobius as an eighth book if the scribes of the Middle Ages had not been accustomed to associate the two writings and their authors? The occurrence of Minucius in the catalogue of Lactantius cannot account for this because the scribes would there have read that he was the author of the *Octavius* which they evidently did not know.

The conclusion from early literary and manuscript tradition is further strengthened by the later literary tradition which always retained through the centuries the connection of Minucius with the African school of apologists. External evidence is next reinforced by important internal indications. There are direct allusions to local religious cults. Peculiarly African divinities, the Punic Juno or Tanit (*Oct.* xxv. 9) and the bloodthirsty Baal-Saturn [1] (xxx. 3), who, Minucius says, is worshipped in some parts of Africa by the sacrifice of infants, are cited. Another remarkable cult is referred to upon which all the historians are silent. Speaking of the deification of kings Minucius (xxi. 9) mentions Romulus, and immediately informs us that, by consent of the Mauri, King Juba was held to be a god. The reference is to Juba II, who was educated at Rome, given the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra in marriage, and made King of Mauretania by Augustus, 25 B.C. (Tac. *Ann.* IV. v). The deification of a local ruler is singular in the Roman world where the honour was reserved for emperors. Local knowledge must here have been the sole sources of Minucius' information, as the apotheosis of Juba was an entirely local affair of no interest outside Africa. We might even doubt the accuracy of the assertion if unexpected proof had not come to light in the province of Mauretania. An inscription has been found in Morocco in

[1] The African Phoenician deity Baal-Chamman. Saturn is assimilated with him here. Waltzing, *Comm. on Min. Fel.* 1909, *in loco*.

the Hassnaoua wherein Juba appears in conjunction with Jupiter and a place Genius.[1]

The well-known and profoundly investigated analogies existing between the *Octavius* of Minucius and the *Apology* of Tertullian, one of the most outstanding figures in African Christian literature, are a phenomenon well-nigh inexplicable if these two writers were not of the same nationality. If one was the imitator of the other there is nothing whatever to show that the plagiarist hailed from another land, as there must have been had Minucius been Roman born. Something in the use of material would have betrayed the foreigner. Exactly the same applies if both Minucius and Tertullian pillaged some lost common author. Again the interlocutors of the *Octavius* are three friends, two of them old friends, Minucius and Octavius, who have apparently been educated together and in earlier life associated in practice at the courts. Of these, Octavius is not domiciled in Rome at the time of the dialogue, but somewhere across the sea. The third speaker, Caecilius, is almost certainly an African, a native of Cirta. It is easier to believe that these intimate friends were compatriots than that they were of different race. The double mention of Fronto (ix. 6 ; xxxi. 2) the orator, a native of Cirta in Africa, does not by itself prove so much as regards the nationality of Minucius as it does that of Caecilius, but it agrees better with the African origin of both of them. Epigraphical evidence closes our inquiry. On a memorial tablet at Tebessa in the interior of Tunis occurs the name Minucius Felix (*C.I.L.* 1964), and again in a dedicatory inscription at Carthage (not far from the modern capital Tunis) is read, 'Minucius Felix sacerdos Saturni' (*C.I.L.* viii. Supplem. 12499).

The presumption is, therefore, that Minucius was an African, in which most authorities agree. The stream of immigration from Africa into Italy among the educated classes seems to have been considerable. Young advocates and orators especially, from the time of Fronto and Minucius to that of the great Augustine, who hailed from an insignificant Numidian town, sought their fortune in the centre of

[1] *C.I.L.* viii. 20627.

the Empire. Two early Popes were furnished by the same movement, the energetic Victor (*c.* 190–202), conspicuous for his part in the Paschal controversy, and Melchiades (311–314). It would almost appear that the Latin Christian influence from Africa had much to do with the submergence of the original Greek element in the Roman Church, and the development of the later character of Christianity in the capital. The importance of North Africa in this period of the Empire is again seen in the fact that the Emperor Septimius Severus (193–211) came from this province.

Dr Salmon (art. *D.C.B.*) sees no proof that Minucius was a lawyer. Lactantius, who is the first to mention this, may have deduced it from the mention by the author in the dialogue that he took advantage of the legal holidays to visit Ostia. But besides the general set up and management of the *Octavius* as if from the pen of an advocate, and the juridical character of his mind so clearly shown in his own part in the dialogue in chapter xiv, we have information from the Christian speaker, who, in the presence of his friend Minucius, says that the injustice of heathen prejudice may be judged from ' our own profession of repentance,' for ' even we had the same blind and stupid opinions,' and although ' we used to undertake the defence ' of criminals ' we did not consider ' that Christians should even be heard, so that ' we used to torture them to confess ' (xxviii. i. 3). Octavius was undoubtedly a barrister, and Minucius had been his bosom friend from early days. They are now taking a holiday together at Ostia because the cessation of legal business has given Minucius the opportunity of leisure. The ' our ' and the ' we ' are not merely rhetorical, but express the fact that both men had conducted cases in the Roman courts.

There were at Carthage celebrated rhetorical schools. Tertullian gives a humorous picture of one of his masters in one of them (*adv. Val.* 8). Here also Minucius may have received his early education. The archaistic fashion in literature was strong in the provinces, and the Ciceronian and poetic colouring of his style could have been acquired as easily at Carthage as in Rome. The success of an African

orator like Fronto would encourage young men of ambition to follow his example, and perhaps Minucius was one of those who, with a provincial love for a professional career and the energetic ability derived from a freshly rooted Latin civilisation, journeyed to Rome to make a mark there. At all events Minucius was sufficiently equipped in philosophic and aesthetic culture to have moved in the highest juridical circles of Rome where the intellectual refinements of Greece and the practical moral consciousness of Rome were combined. Lactantius was probably not far wrong when he says that Minucius held a distinguished place in his profession. He had been reading writers for their eloquence, and he gives Minucius the first position of honour (*Div. Inst.* V. i. 21).[1] If we assign to Minucius any date between Fronto and Alexander Severus his life would fall within the second splendid period of Roman jurisprudence.

Minucius was born a Pagan. He seems to have been impressed by the behaviour of Christians in course of his practice in the courts. None of them ever descended to becoming an informer or betrayed the slightest fear (xxviii. 2). The supreme courage of the martyrs (c. xxxvii.) filled him with admiration, if we may judge by the paean of praise he bestows upon them. From the general trend of the *Octavius* it is evident that the simple doctrines of Christ and the blameless lives of His followers were the final means of winning Minucius to the Faith, probably in the flower of his age and the maturity of his talent, as also was Tertullian. The society of his Christian compatriots at Rome would readily receive him. That body, if a conjecture which will be discussed later could be accepted, would be of Theodotian colouring, asserting that Christ was 'mere man' (cf. *Oct.* xxix. 4), but it is more likely that it was one of the orthodox congregations. One is astonished, however, that Minucius was able to continue in practice at the Roman bar at a time when Christianity was not a lawful religion. The law prescribing the oath by the Genius of the Emperor in giving evidence was inflexible,

[1] Jerome admired Minucius for his extensive knowledge of profane literature (*Ep.* lxx. 5).

and became the final test in Christian cases. Minucius, in alluding to this oath (xxix. 5), does not admit that Christians objected to take it, but only remarks upon the extraordinary importance attached to it, as opposed to the common oath by Jupiter. His daily practice must have required an outward compliance, which doubtless was forthcoming. The African temperament of Minucius probably permitted some of that compromise in the practical affairs of life which filled Tertullian with such profound disgust at his Christian compatriots. Christians were to be found unblushingly following the professions of the astrologer on the plea that the stars foretold Christ (*de Idololat.* 9), and of the schoolmaster, which, of course, involved the teaching of Pagan mythology, of the poets as popular theologians, and of the observance of religious festivals (*ibid.* 10). The refusal to deck the doors with laurel and lights on public festivals (cf. Tert. *Apol.* 35) was by no means universal. Some Christians even exceeded their neighbours in lavish display. After this one can better understand that a sincere Christian could practise law.

Our first impression of Minucius as a man is that the emotions of his soul ran in deep channels. He is capable of friendship of that most enduring kind which arises from the warm springs of a simple and natural disposition. There is no posturing in a man who can relate with such open pleasure the story of the charms of childish prattle and boyish sports (*Oct.* ii. 1 ; iii. 5, 6) in the midst of a serious work on religion. From the varied knowledge of profane literature which the *Octavius* reveals and the extreme and meticulous care which he has bestowed upon his style we see that Minucius was a studious man of rare aesthetic sense.[1] The commonplaces of sandy shore and restless sea are to his poetic mind delicious novelties (ii. 4 ; iii. 3). Minucius is withal a man of practical and sober judgment. The sage advice, which, as a discreet umpire, he gives to Caecilius on the distinction to be observed between the plausibility of forensic pleading and the enunciation of unadorned truth,

[1] That he was of sedentary habit is shown by his resort to sea-baths for the restoration of his health (ii. 3).

presents to our mind the picture of a man who has enjoyed a wide experience of human nature where it is seen at its worst, and yet has escaped the pitfall of pessimism. As becomes a man of finer feeling he is greatly relieved to find at the close of the speech of Octavius that there is no need for him to pronounce judgment against Caecilius. Probably the same refined and kindly diffidence accounts for his not having obtruded Christianity upon his young companion at any time during their intercourse. Of his own religious convictions the *Octavius* is an everlasting monument.

The time when Minucius lived is a problem which will occupy a separate chapter. It is enough to say here that his *floruit* has been placed as early as the Antonines and as late as Diocletian, within a range of a century and a half. A modern critic has fixed the extreme limits of his life between 120 and 180, supposing the dialogue to have taken place in 162, and to have been drafted after 163.[1] Another authority suggests that Minucius did not write the *Octavius* until he had left the Roman bar and had returned to Africa.[2] Many authorities place his life in a period contemporary with Justin M. Not one of the small band of educated Christians at Rome could there have been in his day but must have known something of the 'ambassador of the Divine Word in the guise of a philosopher' (Euseb. *H.E.* IV. xi. 8) who always wore his philosopher's cloak as having 'found Christianity to be the only philosophy that is sure and suited to man's wants' (*Dial. with Trypho*). One might indulge the fancy and imagine Minucius to have been of those who, like Tatian, resorted to the apartments occupied by the Christian philosopher above the house of Martinus at the Timotinian Bath for the purpose of inquiry and instruction. There, too, if the Acta of Justin's martyrdom are reliable, on the authority of Justin himself, was the only Christian meeting he knew of in Rome.

All who have read the *Octavius* will share the regret of Lactantius that the author of such a work has left what for

[1] G. B. Bertoldi: *M. Min. Fel. e il suo dial. Oct.*, Rome, Soc. edit. Dante Alighieri, 1906.

[2] G. Krüger: *Krit. Bem. in Goett. gel. Anz.* (1905), p. 40.

him is a too slight contribution to ecclesiastical literature. The dialogue form of his only extant work imposed limitations on the genius of Minucius which do not allow us to judge his ability as a defender of the faith from an adequate point of view. Other compositions may, however, have existed which are now lost, and this would not surprise us, seeing that the preservation of what we do possess has depended upon so slender a thread. From the closing words of Caecilius,[1] in which he demands further instruction on particular points, it would almost seem that Minucius contemplated the composition of a series of tracts in a graduated course of instruction, of which the *Octavius* was the first, and indeed there is some reason to believe that he actually did publish a book 'On Fate.' In *Oct.* xi. 5 Caecilius asserts that the Christian doctrine of election is equivalent to that of Fate, and in reply (xxxvi. 1, 2) Octavius says that Fate can provide neither consolation nor excuse, because a man's mind is free. Fate is none else than God's predestination which arises from His foreknowledge of what men's characters will be, without predetermination to punishment as the mere consequence of birth.[2] But the Christian (whom we must identify with the author here) is fully conscious of the difficulty of this ever insistent problem. The present moment did not provide sufficient opportunity for a disquisition requiring separate treatment. He therefore continues (xxxvi. 2): 'Ac de fato satis, vel si pauca, pro tempore, disputaturi alias et uberius et plenius.' Minucius thinks that he has said enough, though little, for the moment, and it is his intention to discuss the matter at greater length and more profoundly on another occasion.[3] That Minucius carried out what appears to be the promise of another work, there is no

[1] *Oct.* xl. 2.

[2] Compare Justin M. *Apol.* 43, 44. P. Schwenke considered that *Oct.* xxxvi. 1, 2 is connected with Justin, although much shorter than its source, *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.* 9 (1883), pp. 279 f.

[3] As Cicero was his chief model for the *Octavius*, it is likely that Minucius was well acquainted with Cicero's valuable treatise on Fate (extant in a fragmentary form), which was the true starting-point in the great controversy in the Church on predestination and free-will.

satisfactory evidence. At the end of the fourth century a book was in existence under his name bearing the title *de Fato vel contra Mathematicos*, 'On Fate or Against the Astrologers,' which Jerome had read, but was doubtful of its authenticity on the score of the style, which did not appear to him to agree with that of the *Octavius*. He was, however, of the opinion that the author, whoever he might be, was a 'disertus homo' (*de Vir. Illustr.* lviii.). Jerome once more (*Ep.* lxx. 5) refers to the book, again questioning the correctness of its ascription to Minucius, but he is so pleased with it that he couples the *de Fato vel contra Mathematicos* with the *Octavius* in the praise which he bestows upon Minucius for classical erudition. If Jerome is right, some capable hand had supplied what was felt to be a regrettable omission.[1] Whether it was a dialogue or not we do not know. Harnack does not think that Jerome was certainly right in suspecting the manuscript he had seen to have been the composition of a Pseudo-Minucius. On the contrary this great savant is of opinion that the *de Fato vel contra Mathematicos* may very well have been the work of Minucius.[2] The suggestion that the book referred to by Jerome was identical with a lost work on the same subject by Tertullian, and ascribed to Minucius through some copyist's error, has received little attention. The remarkable relationship between these two authors extends beyond the *Apologeticus*. Tertullian, in the *de Anima* 20, when speaking of influences which act upon the soul, mentions the supreme powers, held by the Christian to be God and the devil, but generally considered to be Fate and Necessity, and remarks that he has already undertaken to discuss the subject on Christian lines in a separate work. The only other reference to this book is by Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, a North African writer of little merit (*c.* A.D. 480 to 550) who cites the *de Fato* of Tertullian and quotes

[1] If the book seen by Jerome was a forgery, its writer, himself a man of learning, must have considered it to be a great advantage to publish the work under the name of Minucius. We conclude that the *Octavius* enjoyed considerable circulation at one time.

[2] Harnack supplies no reasons. If the book was not in dialogue form its style might appear at first sight to differ from that of the *Octavius*.

a sentence from it : ' Nam et Tertullianus in libro quem de Fato scripsit ita ait : " Redde huic fratri primum problematis mancipatum." ' [1] Harnack comments upon these peculiar facts in the relationship which exists between Minucius and Tertullian. Both are lawyers, both writers of an apology intimately connected with the other, and both are composers of a tract *de Fato*, thus constituting a threefold puzzle.

It has been supposed by J. Langen (*de comm. in epp. Pauli etc.*, Bonn, 1880, and *Gesch. der röm. Kirche*, i. 599) that Rufinus of Aquileia (A.D. 345 to 410) was the author of the Pseudo-Augustine *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, but that the section No. 115 *de Fato* is connected with the lost work of Minucius on the same theme. Harnack dismisses the latter conjecture as mere imagination, and an inspection of the piece [2] confirms his verdict. The tract is interesting but its style bears no resemblance at all to that of Minucius. It opens : ' Nihil tam contrarium Christiano, quam si arti matheseos adhibeat curam. Haec enim inimica dignoscitur Dei legi. Si enim nascuntur qui mali sint, et e contra qui boni sint ; frustra lex data dicitur : et non solum hoc, sed et iniustus habebitur Legislator.' The first words show that the author is addressing himself to the instructed Christian, who might be misled by the arts of astrology into adopting fatalistic opinions which would negative his faith. There is no appeal here to the heathen world such as Minucius would have been most anxious to make. The latinity is poor in vocabulary, unpolished, and as unlike the classical exquisiteness of Minucius as, for example, a modern newspaper leader is to the Essays of Francis Bacon. Compare also the closing paragraph : ' Nos autem qui de Deo omnia prospera credimus, et si qua adversa extiterint, eius nutu comprimi, suppliciter vivamus securi de eius protectione ; nec tamen nescii quia et si quid adversum bene nobis agentibus evenerit, toleratum proficiet ad coronam.' [3]

[1] *Opera* ed. by Helm (1898), p. 116.

[2] Printed in Migne, *P.L.* xxxv. 2347 to 2359. Compare a short effort 'Contra Mathematicos,' Migne, *P.L.* xi. pp. 28, 29, in Aug. *de Div. Quaest.* 45.

[3] Hilarius the Deacon, fourth century, has been credited with the authorship of these *Quaestiones* as well as Rufinus.

The Church had a bitter struggle with the Fatalistic poison, distilled by the Stoics, and distributed by the charlatans and jugglers, who preyed upon the credulity of a society half agnostic and half grossly superstitious, under the disarming misnomer of 'mathematici' or astrologers. The parrot cries were 'It is Fate,' 'The stars have decreed,' 'Necessity explains all,' and the first defenders of the faith were compelled to attack a stronghold which sheltered many false and soul-destroying opinions. Justin M., however tender he might feel towards some doctrines of the Stoics, condemns them for their Fatalism (2 *Apol.* 7). In opposition he teaches the Christian doctrine of election, but not very clearly. He seems (*Dial.* p. 290) to regard predestination as arising from God's foreknowledge of the merits of individuals in the Arminian sense, but probably he means no more than that some are elected from the world into the Church without referring to final salvation. The unjust doctrine of Fate is ascribed by Tatian (*Address to the Greeks, circa* A.D. 165, c. viii.) to demons, who are in fact the heathen gods, and who were the inventors of astrology (c. ix.). Some Christians in Africa were foolish or dishonest enough still to follow the calling of the astrologer and to attempt to justify it as consistent with their religion, as we have seen Tertullian informs us (*de Idololatria*, 9). How he met the popular Fatalistic notions we cannot tell, probably because his special tract *de Fato* has not come down to us. He says little more in his extant works than that we cannot refer everything to the will of God, for if this were so it would excuse every sin (*de Exhort. Cast.* 2). Not much further appears in the Fathers until the advent of Pelagianism brought Augustine into the field. They seem to have been satisfied with the broad foreknowledge theory as seen in Minucius, without making serious excursions into the problem of the relation between election, free-will, and grace.

Astrology had its truest home in the East, and in Syria at a date somewhere between the last quarter of the second and the first quarter of the third century Bardesanes wrote a dialogue *On Fate*, extant in Syriac under the title of the

Book of the Laws of the Countries, in which he proves that the influence of the stars cannot decide a person's character from birth.[1] Hippolytus, the rival of Pope Callixtus, 217 to 222 (see *Philosophumena*, ix. 7, 11, 12), the first known anti-pope, was a man of amazing literary productiveness, unrivalled in the West at that time for his erudition. Among his many works (which are in Greek) there was one, not now extant, entitled *Against the Magi*, the substance of which is probably embodied in the fourth book (and was also in the missing second and third) of his invaluable *Philosophumena*. In the course of fifty-one chapters of this fourth book Hippolytus gives a comprehensive account of the astrologers, their systems and methods, and the trickeries of the magicians, just what we might have expected of Minucius in his *de Fato vel contra Mathematicos*, but in the latter's own condensed and epigrammatic style, and in the vein of his ridicule of the heathen sacred rites (*Oct.* 23 (22)) and of his account of the occult activities of demons (*Oct.* 27). Hippolytus throws a searching light upon the ingenious impostors [2] of that age and exposes a cult of the unseen which has striking analogies with the subsequent long history of witchcraft and spiritism still being written in the twentieth century. Details and materials differ, but the essentials of the working remain unchanged. Hippolytus, for instance, describes the method of divination by means of a cauldron, of the illusion of a fiery demon (c. xxxv.), of making a skull to speak (xli.), all of which has its modern counterpart in the crystal-gazing of the fortune-teller's parlour, and the apparitions and trumpet-voices of the séance chamber of to-day. The discourse *On Fate* which Minucius had in mind would have much more to meet than the stock arguments of the Stoic philosophers on Necessity. The magicmongers who had seized upon fatalism as the backing for their horoscopes and divinations, and combined fortune-telling with spirit-raising and devil-worship, were

[1] Printed in Syriac and English by W. Cureton in *Spicilegium Syriacum* (1885), pp. 1 to 21; 21 to 34.

[2] Min. xxvi. 10 refers the jugglery of the 'magi' (synonymous at Rome with 'magici') to the assistance given by demons.

more dangerous than the solemn cloaked philosophers in their professorial chairs. Minucius could not afford to neglect dealing with them. Therefore if ever he did write the book he had in contemplation, the title seen by Jerome may well be correct, *de Fato vel contra Mathematicos*.

CHAPTER II

The Pagan Case

The argument of Caecilius, in defence of his own religious views and against Christianity, falls into four main divisions, and may be analysed as follows[1]:

1. The Christians in bringing in a new religion cannot make any contribution to certainty with regard to God, Creation, or Providence. Truth is doubtful, for things are probable rather than true, the Christians are not fitted by knowledge or training to pronounce any opinion on the Supreme, and indeed it is impossible for man in his insignificance to do so, neither is it of any use, since the maxim of Socrates, 'Know thyself,' is quite sufficient for happiness and wisdom. The universe has come into existence by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, which admits of no Maker, Judge, or Author. Providence is disproved by the operation of automatic forces producing natural calamities which involve the good and bad without discrimination, and no divine interposition has saved such men as Socrates from death. We must rather believe that Chance unrestrained by law holds full sway (c. v.).

2. We ought to uphold the religion of our forefathers, because where things are uncertain it is better to accept the teaching handed down by them as the high priest of truth, for they lived in the early age of the world when men enjoyed the privilege of having the gods as benefactors or kings. Experience has shown the advantage of venerating the gods, for Rome owes her vast empire to them alone,

[1] Many have either summarised or analysed the *Oct.* at greater or less length. The best example of the former is that of Ad. Ebert, *Tertullians Verhältniss zu Minucius Felix*, 1870, and of the latter that of J. G. Lindner in his editions of 1760 and 1773.

exhibiting her piety both in devotion to her own national gods even in adversity and to the foreign divinities of the peoples she conquered, as also in her chaste virgins and organisation of the priesthood (c. vi.). That religion has made Rome great is proved by the special care which she gave in its institution both for the purpose of obtaining assistance and averting displeasure, by the consequences which followed auguries according as they were obeyed or neglected, by the decrees of Fate predicted through the oracles, and by the prophecies and beneficent offices of our divinely inspired seers (c. vii.). Finally, the existence of the immortal gods is established by the universal consent of the nations (viii. 1).

3. The Christian religion is of no value, which is proved under three main heads : firstly, the Christians are socially objectionable; secondly, their sacred rites are execrable; and thirdly, their doctrines are absurd. To begin with, this sect has been formed by desperate characters out of the ignorant class, the very dregs, and silly women, into a band of conspirators united by crime. These people say nothing openly, but are active propagandists under the cover of secrecy, an honourable career of office as citizens is despised by them (viii. 4), and their centres of operation are spreading to an alarming extent all over the world (ix. 1). Secret marks and signs are employed to make them known to each other alone, and the initiates pretend to a certain mutual affection under the terms of brothers and sisters which serves only as a cloak for the vilest immorality (ix. 2). As to their cult it includes the worship of the head of an ass (ix. 3), and perhaps a phallic element, for 'Alii eos ferunt ipsius antistitis ac sacerdotis colere genitalia et quasi parentis sui adorare naturam.' Other objects of their veneration are a man executed for crime and the gallows cross. Initiation consists in the ritual murder of an infant and in devouring it afterwards (xi. 5). The shameless orgies at their banquets are notorious (ix. 6). All this is proved to be true by the careful way in which the Christians conceal everything about themselves (x. 1, 2). Turning, in the next place, to what they teach, we have their doctrine of the

unity of God, a solitary, neglected, powerless divinity. Monstrous and portentous things are invented about him, such as that he is invisible, which is an absurdity, that he is omniscient, omnipresent, meddling with everything, which is objectionable and impossible (x. 3, 4, 5). Concerning the world they have a frantic opinion that in spite of the fixed laws of nature the universe will be involved in total destruction by fire at some time (xi. 1). In addition, with strange self-confidence they concoct idle tales about being reborn after death, and in order to substantiate the idea they have to assume other absurdities (xi. 2). Cremation is rejected lest the destruction of the body by a speedier means should prevent its restoration (xi. 4). Mankind is divided by them into two classes: themselves, the elect, who shall enjoy the happiness of eternal life; and the rest who shall suffer never-ending pains after death (xi. 5). The Christian God is unjust to punish men for what they cannot help, since what shall be their lot is decreed by an election which is only another word for Fate (xi. 5, 6). But the resurrection of the body is impossible, for it must either be without a body or with a body. If the former, there cannot be mind or soul or life without a body; if the latter, then it must be the same body which has been long dissolved to nothing, or another body, which means that a new man is to be made, not an old one restored (xi. 7). Not a single credible instance can be brought forward of such a thing having happened during the countless ages of the world. Moreover, the present condition of the Christians completely stultifies their hopes for the future. The greater part of them are suffering in poverty, with hunger, and with hard toil, yet their God makes no move, gives no sign. Like others they are the victims of terror, fever, and pain. Persecution, torture, condemnation to crucifixion are awaiting them, but their God, who will raise the dead, brings no succour to the living, and does not interfere with the exercise of the Roman power upon them and all the world besides. In view of this hope of a resurrection the Christians deprive themselves of all the simple pleasures of life, such as going to the theatre, seeing

the public processions, or sharing the public feasts. Innocent customs come under their ban. They will neither wear a wreath of flowers nor put one on a grave, and rejecting perfumes for the body use them at funerals. Anaemic and neurotic, they are too miserable to live now, let alone in the future (xii. 1–6).

4. And so, to sum it all up, the Christians ought to desist from their barren investigations into divine matters. Their position is unsuited for any such pursuit (xii. 7). What is above us has nothing to do with us, as Socrates said. A cautious scepticism likewise distinguished Arcesilas, Carneades and some of the Academic philosophers. Simonides the poet said that the more he thought about theology the worse was his confusion. In my opinion things that are doubtful should be left severely alone. Otherwise the folly of inane speculation will bring all religion to an end (xiii.).

A true philosopher must possess above all the essential principle of impartiality. Minucius Felix has the merit, unique among the early defenders of the faith, of recognising that the non-Christian had something of weight to say, and of allowing him to speak without reserve. In the speech of Caecilius are found all the principal objections and traditional attacks of the heathen against the Christians, together with arguments of his own and in favour of the gods of Rome. Far from the author of the *Octavius* was that fanaticism which too often blinds the eyes of the convert to what is in fairness due to the side which he has himself deserted. But now, after a full hearing has been given, Minucius, in the character of his Christian protagonist, feels quite at liberty to castigate the heathen argumentation (c. xvi.). It is ' wavering, wandering, unsteady, slipping,' either involuntarily or of set purpose in order to confuse. At one time Caecilius denies that the gods exist, and at another seems to be making up his mind that they do. He is like a traveller standing at the cross-roads unable to decide whether one direction is right or all are wrong, or he is as a wave of the sea helplessly tossed hither and thither. This criticism is just. Caecilius begins abruptly by plunging ' in medias res ' with the crushing blow which

the Academy levelled against all other philosophies. 'Everything human is doubtful, uncertain, rather probable than true' (v. 2). A sure knowledge of things is, therefore, impossible, especially with respect to the super-terrestrial. Right-minded persons make careful pause. Self-knowledge alone is within attainable reach. How offensive and even dangerous then is the unwarrantable claim of the Christians to possession of the key to certitude! Other reasonings and polemic follow until the final peroration is reached. There again Caecilius returns to his primary position, and cites with approval the proverb widely attributed to Socrates, 'quod supra nos, nihil ad nos' (xiii. 1).[1] He recommends that Socrates, 'the wisest of men,' as the Delphic Oracle declared, should be followed. His pre-eminence above all consisted in that knowledge which was great enough to avow its ignorance (xiii. 2). The final words of Caecilius definitely attach him to the 'tuta dubitatio' which flowed from Socrates to Arcesilas and Carneades and the Academics generally. Such a 'prudent scepticism' enables an ignorant man to philosophise with safety and a learned man with credit (xiii. 3). The poet Simonides was right in refusing to give an opinion on the gods (xiii. 4). Caecilius closes with a personal confession of Academic principle: 'Mea quoque opinione, quae sunt dubia, ut sunt, relinquenda sunt' (xiii. 5).

Caecilius here appears on his sceptical side, but it would be a mistake to regard him as being a sceptic in the modern sense of the word. He is not a disciple of Pyrrho. Doubt with the latter developed into an inhuman indifference. The 'tuta dubitatio' of Arcesilas[2] led to no more than a suspension of judgment, and that of Carneades[3] admitted

[1] Cf. Jerome, *ad Ruf.* viii.; Lact. *Div. Inst.* III. xx. 10. Tert. *ad Nat.* ii. 4 refers the dictum to Epicurus. Socrates was not an agnostic and his scepticism was mild compared with that of some of his followers. He thought it unprofitable to continue research into celestial matters, and preferred to study man himself, and how to live well. From physics he turned to ethics. See Cicero, *Acad. post.* i. 15.

[2] Founder of the Middle Academy. The Old Academy, consisting of Plato and his disciples, took doubt to be the beginning of knowledge and not its ending.

[3] Founder of the New Academy.

probabilities and taught men to build their lives upon them. Cicero (*de Nat. Deor.* I. v. 12) defines the position of the Academics of his day as follows: 'we are not people to whom nothing seems to be true, but we do say that some falsehoods are blended with all truths with such a resemblance of them, that there are no certain marks to judge or assert by. Hence it follows that many things are probable which, although they are not perceived as such, have yet a certain outstanding and excellent aspect, so that a wise man regulates his life by them.' However unsatisfactory this may be, at least there is some attempt at constructiveness; it is not virulent scepticism which only seeks to destroy and is utterly barren of any positive good. If the term may be used, is not 'probabilism' a better word to describe the tenets of the later disciples of the Academy? At any rate, such was the shade of scepticism which coloured the mind of Caecilius, and there are a number of indications which point to Minucius having before his mind the Pontifex C. Cotta of Cicero's 'On the Nature of the Gods' when he is presenting the views of his friend in the *Octavius*. Cotta (who is probably to be identified with Cicero himself) is an Academician, and therefore free to criticise all other philosophic schools. In his reply to the Epicurean Velleius he begins, as Caecilius in the *Octavius* ends, with the example of Simonides: 'if you ask me what or of what nature God is, I will follow the example of Simonides, etc.' (*de N.D.* I. xxii. 60). Again, Cotta (III. xxxii. 33) argues that if the gods regarded mankind they would have made all men virtuous, and gives a catalogue of instances which Caecilius faithfully follows (*Oct.* v. 12). Another point will be noticed later on. But Caecilius, after his first professions, deserts Cotta for a time in favour of Epicureanism, which is advocated by Velleius (of the *de N.D.*), although he does not show so much resemblance to this character. Suppose, he argues, that we do venture into transcendental speculation with regard to the origin and order of the universe: suppose we adopt for the sake of argument the theory of atoms, what shall we find? Caecilius proceeds to expound the Lucretian-Epicurean

Cosmogony[1] (*Oct.* v. 7–9). The self-fructifying force of nature,[2] he says, may have caused, in the beginning, an aggregation of atoms ('omnium semina'), and from the fortuitous concourse of these may have issued the members of the universe (earth, air or heaven, sea, fire). The stars may have been lighted by fire,[3] the sky may have been made by the separation of the lighter material, the earth by its own weight, and the sea by liquid elements flowing together. Caecilius at this stage relinquishes hypothesis and becomes dogmatic. Man and the animals consist of a spontaneous concretion of atoms ('elementa') which in time dissolves and is scattered. The same cycle is true of everything. Each day a new sun is born (in place of the previous day's sun whose dissolution brought night) by a fresh congregation of fiery atoms. In all this there is no need of any God who is Author, Engineer, Artificer, or Judge. Reverence to Deity, whether in moderation or excess, or any fear at all are alike out of the question. Caecilius continues his arguments to show that the natural forces of the world operate automatically and with complete indifference to the affairs and interests of mankind. The conclusion is that there is no Providential ruling of the world (v. 9–13). After an interval of some chapters in which a different view is expressed, Caecilius is indebted to Velleius for an objection to the idea of God concerning Himself with mundane matters (x. 5).[4] It will be seen that the heathen advocate is inconsistent. From honest scepticism he turns to downright atheism. But this is not his only change of front. An even more surprising move follows. Either Arcesilas

[1] Min. draws on Lucretius *de Natura Rerum*, book v.; also on books i, ii. Leucippus invented the theory of atoms, and Democritus and Epicurus developed it. Lucretius put it into verse. Infinite void and indivisible bodies called atoms existed from the beginning, and (said Epicurus) the blind force of Nature produced a chance clashing together from which came the world. *Oct.* xix. 8: 'Epicurus put Nature above the gods.' The origin of Nature and of atoms is left unexplained.

[2] This idea of Nature is not from Epicurus.

[3] *i.e.* by fiery atoms. He does not mean the original fire out of which the world emerged according to Heraclitus.

[4] He carefully investigates men's characters and actions, is restless and shamefully inquisitive (curiosus). Compare *de N.D.* I. xx. 54, 'Omnia ad se pertinere putans,' 'curiosus,' 'plenus negotii.'

or Epicurus is right, therefore we ought to accept the religion of our ancestors ! (vi. 1). Either we are uncertain about God, or there is no God, therefore we ought to worship the gods of our country ! There is a sense in which a sceptic may conform with the practices of a conventional faith, but absolute denial of God must put a man outside all religion.[1] What is the explanation ? Caecilius has spoiled his case by bringing in what does not belong to his Academical premise. For a while he has deserted Cotta in favour of Velleius. Now he returns to his original allegiance. We shall understand the position better if we first of all look at the dialogue of Cicero. At the end of the second book of the *de Natura Deorum* Balbus the Stoic reminds Cotta of his sacred duties as Pontifex, and calls upon him to support his contentions in favour of the gods, an Academic being at liberty to take whatever side he chooses. In his reply to Velleius there had been nothing but destructive criticism which, in exploding the false opinions of the gods, had endangered those verities which Balbus as a Stoic maintained, the existence of Deity and Divine Providence (II. i. 3). Cotta has already said that he did not deny the existence of the gods. Now he is more explicit. He requires from Balbus reasons for his theological statements, but as for himself and his sacred office he believes the religion of his ancestors without proof (III. ii. 6). It is the arguments of Balbus which he impugns. For him tradition was enough (III. iv. 9), and the proofs advanced for the existence of the gods only render a proposition doubtful that is not so (III. iv. 10). But however attractive this profession of religion by faith and not through reason may be, it is no more than accepting the religion of Rome as an institution upon which it was founded. The correct view, doubtless, for the good of the state, must be that Romulus and Numa established the worship of Rome upon right principles, and the grandeur of Rome proves that she has thereby won the favour of the gods (III. ii. 5).

[1] The Epicureans, however, did not consider themselves to be atheists. Velleius in the *de N.D.* book ii. admits that there are immortal gods, but they do nothing, live at perfect ease, and have no interest in this world. The gods, according to this view, are a mere abstract conception of ideal existence.

In a similar manner Caecilius maintains (vi. 1) that as the laws of nature are hidden and the caprices of fortune only too evident, there is the more reason why men should adhere to the faith of their fathers who had enjoyed the benefit of knowing the gods intimately. But from this point there is an important cleavage between Caecilius and Cotta. The latter is cold and utilitarian, the political priest. Caecilius is as warm and earnest as the Stoic Balbus. He is much more than a good citizen who respects every state institution as a matter of course. Caecilius is devoted to the ancient religion of Rome. He will not reject it because of superstitions,but accepts it with all its fables. Forgotten is his diatribe against Providence : he now solemnly urges the faithful observance of omens and prodigies.[1] What and whence the immortal gods may be (viii. 1) it is audacious impiety to attempt to weaken their influence. Atheists will never add credit to themselves by their sham philosophy (viii. 2). Proofs abound of the benevolence of the gods towards the Roman state. Look at the splendid temples with which Rome is adorned. She is fortified with her religious rites, her virgins, and her priests. She is universal in her cult. She is super-religious. Therefore the gods have given her the dominion of the world (cc. vi. vii.). Caecilius, like Cotta, exhibits that unexpected combination between scepticism and religion, but he is even more perplexing. He is like Cotta converted, Cotta turned Stoic. By the example of his prototype we can understand him in the rôle of sceptic-conformist, but we are not prepared to see Caecilius the Academico-Lucretian appear in the lists as a Stoic devotee. The explanation is not to be sought in the literary composition of the *Octavius*. No bridge was necessary to pass over to the Frontonian invective against the Christians which follows.[2] The age of Minucius Felix was not that of Cicero. Men were tired of cold dispassionate speculations and criticisms. A new and passionate desire

[1] Cf. *Oct.* v. 12, 13, with vii. 5, 6.

[2] The opinion of S. Colombo in *Didaskaleion*, 1914, art. on Min. Fel., pp. 79–121, is that *Oct.* vi. f. is a transition from Cicero which Minucius makes in order to prepare for the Frontonian attack which begins in c. ix.

for a living faith had been born and was stirring the Roman world. Its first phase was certain to be a long and bitter controversy in the search for truth. In Caecilius we see a protagonist in the stand which the best elements of intellectual and religious Paganism were forced to make in the defence of their ancient positions.

In the mind of Caecilius there are two main difficulties on which in the last chapter he professes himself to have been satisfied, viz. Providence and God, and the Christian sect. What most gravely troubles him about the former is that virtue seems to be oppressed and vice triumphant, which is part of the great problem of evil (v. 12). No direct answer is given to him on this point. The conception of evil must depend on the idea of what is man's highest good. Doubtless Caecilius accepted the view put forward by Octavius that God allows good men to suffer in order to develop their characters, and rewards virtue and punishes vice in another world. In the realm of physical evil we cannot see that the objections of Caecilius have been approached at all in the reply. Storm, shipwreck, fire, pestilence involve the innocent as well as the guilty in destruction and death. The very harvests of corn and vine are ruined by tempests of storm and hail (v. 10–13). He seems to have been content to accept the general reasons given by Octavius in favour of Providence without at once requiring a solution in detail. But the great value of the speech of Caecilius lies in what it reveals of the contemporaneous attitude of the heathen towards Christianity. The calm tone of philosophy, and the enthusiastic warmth of the religious patriot are succeeded, in the brief of Caecilius, by a fierce onslaught of denunciation of the Christians, passing into scornful satire. Even if it be granted that Caecilius is quoting the words of Fronto (which is the same as Minucius using the speech of that orator as one of his sources) the appearance of so violent a diatribe is significant. How could the Academic-Epicurean-Stoic indulge in such unphilosophic abuse? To us he only succeeds in making his arguments conclude with a climax which spoils his whole case. He could have formulated objections against the

Christians without descending to vilification, and, to our mind, they would have been all the more dangerous. But Octavius shows no consciousness of this. What is the explanation? It must be that the Pagans of that time sincerely believed that the slanders (spread by that all-powerful Rumour of which Tertullian complains in his Apology) were really true, and that the growth of Christianity was an evil of which very serious notice must be taken.[1] The seemingly deliberate aloofness and secrecy of the Christians aroused deep and dark suspicions. To the pagan world they seemed contemptuously indifferent to the social order, and unnaturally morose, as if conscious of crimes which cut them off from their fellows and cemented them into a sinister brotherhood. Without doubt many of the small shopkeeper class and manual workers were to be found in the early Church, a section of the population which the educated Roman who had passed through the schools regarded as rabble quite incapable of any thought save that of vulgarity and ignorance, in whose ranks any abomination might find a fruitful soil.[2] When we think of the state of Roman society at this period it is clear that there were adequate grounds for the general fear of popular movements. Slowly the pagan mind began to catch a glimmer of the fact that the Christian Church was, in a sense which was misunderstood, a kingdom within the Empire and subversive of it. The Church had a usage which, as Maximin said in his letter to Sabinus (A.D. 311), was 'alien to the Romans.' Therefore Christianity could not be recognised as a 'religio licita.'[3] Caecilius has a dim consciousness of

[1] Otherwise it must be inexplicable that a Roman gentleman should speak as he does of a sect to which both his friends, whom he loves and respects, belong. Further, despite the great roads of Rome, there was no real publicity as we understand it. Ridicule is the best weapon against falsehood, but to be effective it must be spread as broadcast as the lie itself.

[2] For such people to dare to philosophise was a grievous complaint among the heathen, and considered to be fraught with danger. Min. v. 4; xiii. 5. Tert. *Apol.* xlvi. declares that the Christians are in no sense philosophers, cf. *Oct.* xii. 7; xiii. 1; Hermias, *Irrisio*, 3.

[3] Tert. *Apol.* iv. replies to the charge 'your existence is illegal.' There was an old law against religions not formally legalised. Cicero refers to it (*de Legibus*, II. viii. 19), 'Let no one have gods apart, and let not men worship in private new or strange gods, except they be publicly adopted.'

what was clearer in a later age. Viewed from this standpoint his defects add probability to his speech.

Among the masses there was an active, ceaseless, mean, and vulgar campaign of lies which it was no one's business to expose, so that the miserable victims were forced to endure the cruellest and most baseless calumnies, without any defence, except their own, which nobody would hear. We have some evidence of the main contributory streams of that vicious gossip which provided salacious discourse in all ranks up and down the Empire. There were domestic troubles like the sordid affair which Justin Martyr relates (2 *Apol.* ii.). A wife who had once shared the dissipations of her husband reformed and became a Christian. After many efforts to recall the husband to a better course of life, the wife, in despair, divorced him. Thereupon the enraged husband obtained the imprisonment of the woman's Christian teacher on false charges, and eventually secured his execution which involved two others in sentence of death. There must have been many such cases of family quarrels and spiteful revenge. Tertullian (*Apol.* iii.) speaks of enemies that rose up against the Christians in their own households. He also mentions the hostility of the extortionate soldiers and that which came from the jealous Jews. The connexion between Judaism and Christianity was apparent enough to the heathen who regarded the latter as merely separatists from the main body.[1] The Christians would share the dislike and contempt which the Jews had aroused in the Empire. Suspicion fell heavily on a race which kept so stubbornly apart, and which, after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, had neither temple nor

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But against Christianity, as such, no law probably existed. Instead there were Rescripts directing the application of the general law to Christians, such as that of Trajan forbidding anonymous accusations, that of Hadrian directing that Christians should only be condemned for definite offences against the law, and another or others restricting torture of Christians to enforcing confession, and upon conviction attaching the penalty of death by decapitation. See on latter, C. Bigg, *Christian Platonists*, p. 303.

[1] Celsus attacks both Jews and Christians as separatists on points of religion common to mankind, the Christians as being separatists from the Jews and between themselves.

altars, and appeared to practise a vague cult of the clouds and heaven. The rite of circumcision was so abhorrent to the Western mind that it gave rise to strange stories of ritual murder of children which are still believed in the remote parts of Europe.[1] Some of this odium was sure to attach itself to the Christian sect. But the heathen were quite aware of the distinction between the two bodies. Instead of falling on the suburb of the Vatican which the Jews had made their own, Nero singled out the Christians in the city to be the atoning sacrifice for the burning of Rome. Hitherto the Jews had alone enjoyed the reputation of being haters of the human race.[2] They were certainly the inveterate foes of the Church. Justin M. tells us (1 *Apol.* xxxi.) that the Jews, in the insurrection under Barcochba (132–135), forced Christians to recant or suffer the cruellest punishment, and that in his own day they killed or injured them whenever they could. Their animosity, however, worked well for the Christians when the Jews were in special disgrace. The Emperor Hadrian would allow no Jew to enter the new city of Aelia Capitolina which he built on the site of Jerusalem, but the ban did not extend to the Christians, and they were permitted to have a Gentile for their bishop. At the martyrdom of Polycarp the Jews were to the front in demanding his death, and eagerly helped to gather the fuel which fed the flames of his pyre. When the Christians sought to prove their doctrines from the Old Testament they were accused of using not the authentic records but fraudulent books.[3] Defamation and denunciation of the Christians would alike satisfy their hatred and shield from suspicion those Jewish elements which had excited a general disgust and abhorrence, which was partly owing to misconception and prejudice, and

[1] In the south-east especially. There was a case in Russia in 1913, which attracted world-wide attention.

[2] We observe that the Christians in the time of Nero must have been fairly numerous to have served Nero's purpose of diverting public suspicion from himself. It may be that some unguarded language about the end of the world by fire or even some foolish boastings of the fall of Anti-Christ and the coming of the millennarial kingdom may have given Nero the excuse he sought. Merivale, *Hist. Christ.* ii. 454–457.

[3] Pseudo-Justin, *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, c. xiii.

partly produced by extremists.[1] The Christian heretical sects, of which there were many, also contributed their share to the popular opinion, either directly or indirectly. Justin M. (1 *Apol.* xxvi.) is inclined to believe that they were guilty of incest and cannibalism, and he cannot understand how it is that they are left undisturbed by the heathen. Origen confirms this view, agreeing that the slanders were not entirely groundless. Irenaeus (*adv. Haeres.* I. i. 28; I. ix. 70) asserts that the heretics openly corrupted their converts and laughed at the chastity of the orthodox. Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* iii. 420) relates a story of Thyestean banquets among the followers of the Alexandrian gnostic Carpocrates. Epiphanius (*Haeres.* xxvi. 43) reports that the Gnostics partook of a common meal upon an infant as their 'perfect passover.' They had wives in common, and a secret sign with the hand upon meeting. The Carpocratians marked their adherents with a slit in the flesh under the right ear (*ibid.* xxvi. 42).[2] After making allowance for the ill-feeling that existed between the orthodox and the heretics, there is no doubt that the childish mysticism and idiosyncrasies of the latter gave credence to all kinds of rumour about the whole Christian community. The freedom from persecution complained of by Justin was not as complete as he thought, certainly not so in later times, but heretics could easily obtain it by apostasy, which for them would not be so difficult. One of the curses of heathen society was the professional informer. False witnesses could always be bought. That the Church suffered enormously from the activities of this vile class is a commonplace of early Christian history. Therefore we find Minucius (xxviii. 2) pointing out that no informer could be obtained by bribery from among the Christians themselves, and Tertullian (*Apol.* vii.) proving that the charges made could not have been founded upon inside information, because non-Christians were never admitted to the meetings, and initiates kept their secrets in

[1] Origen also says that the Jews were the authors of the lies circulated concerning the Christians.

[2] See note on 1 *Apol.* xxxv. in Kaye's *Justin Martyr*; Euseb. *H.E.* iv. 7.

the recognised manner of the mystery religions. Certain Christian forgeries of the second century clearly expose the part played by detestable informers during the persecutions. The Letter of Hadrian to Minucius Fundanus[1] in behalf of the Christians opens with a warning against the dangers of villainous informers, that of Antoninus to the Common Assembly of Asia directs that an informer against a Christian merely as a Christian and not as a criminal must be brought to justice, and that of Marcus Aurelius to the Senate (on the ' Thundering Legion ') commands that informers against innocent Christians should be burned alive.[2] Evidence by means of torture whether physical or mental can be obtained to prove whatever the examiners desire. Minucius Felix (xxviii. 5) does not seem to object to torture if applied to compel confession of crime, and his point is that the object of the court was to produce the negative result of denial of faith.[3] The Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons[4] relates, however, that heathen servants of Christians were forced by threats of torture to confess to Thyestean banquets and the incests of Oedipus (Eus. *H.E.* v. 1). Justin M. (2 *Apol.* xii.) informs us that slaves, women, and children were tortured until they confessed anything to escape their agonies. Naturally the martyrologies do not bring lapses under torture prominently forward, but they must have been not infrequent.[5] Lastly, the way to popular prejudice against the Christians was paved by the heathens themselves. Justly one early Christian apologist after another points out that the obscenities of mythology and the barbarities practised in their religions had prepared their minds to

[1] Mommsen and many great critics regard this letter as authentic. Anonymous informers were strongly condemned in Trajan's Rescript to Pliny the younger.

[2] These epistles are attached to the collection of Justin's works.

[3] Humane judges constantly sought this means of satisfying the law and of releasing the prisoners. The Acta of the martyrs are full of instances.

[4] A.D. 177.

[5] Pliny's letter to Trajan relates the unsuccessful torture of two women, perhaps deaconesses, who confessed no crime and would not abjure Christ. But many apostatised in Bithynia and so escaped. Pliny does not appear to believe that the Christians had committed the crimes ascribed to them.

believe the same things of others.[1] Pseudo-Justin, *Oratio ad Graecos* (A.D. 180–240, supposed by some to be the work of one Ambrosius and related to the *Epistle of Diognetus*), shows that there was nothing far-fetched in the idea of persons indulging in orgiastic feasts. In c. iv. the author expresses his unmitigated disgust at the common custom of perfumed flower-crowned people feasting to excess while meretricious music was playing presumably for dances of a very questionable kind. But the licentiousness of those times needs no description. One practice, however, has a special bearing on the retorsion of the slanders upon the heathen themselves, a practice referred to by Minucius, Tertullian, and others, in which there appears the double crime of child-murder and incest, that is the custom of abandoning unwanted children. The Roman law allowed the father the right to reject his child if he wished, with the result that exposure at birth was the unhappy fate of numerous infants, especially of those sprung from parents of limited means. Some mitigation was afforded by the provision publicly and privately made to save these lives, but there was a pernicious class which made a trade out of the unnatural cruelty, and the abandoned children were collected and saved for the purpose of slavery or vice. The Christian apologists are constantly hammering at the appalling state of a society which regarded infanticide with no horror and seemed to have no consciousness of the deepened shade which it imparted to the promiscuous habits of so many of its members. Infanticidium, lenocinium, incestum, such was the closely linked chain of crime until, after the reign of Constantine, it was broken by Valentinian in A.D. 374 by making infanticide punishable as murder.[2] Again, even the religious rites at Rome were not innocent

[1] Aristides, *Apol.* (Syriac), xvii.; Athenag. *Embassy*, iii.; Theoph. *ad Autol.* iii. 4; Tatian, *Orat.* xxv. He planned but probably did not write a special book in refutation of the calumnies (c. xl.). Also Justin, 2 *Apol.* xii.; the speaker in his *Dial. with Trypho* does not show any inclination to believe the slanders. We have already referred to passages in Minucius and Tert. *Apol.* Celsus does not repeat the slanders so current in the time of M. Aurelius, but he charges the Christians with practising magical arts for the ruin of mankind (Cel. ap. Origen, I. vi. 68; vi. 39).

[2] See C. Bigg, *The Church's Task under the Roman Empire*, p. 108.

of human butchery (Min. xxiii, 8; xxx. 4). On the occasion of the Latin holidays a gladiator was killed on the Capitol and his hot blood poured out in sacrifice to Juppiter Latiaris even under the Empire, and at the very time when Christians were being condemned by the heathen for ritual murder. Minucius (c. xxx.) refers to other barbaric rites in the heathen world. Tiberius found it necessary to interdict Moloch worship in Africa, and Claudius forbade Druidism in Gaul. Of Eastern sects which had obtained a footing in Rome during the earlier period of the Empire, Mithraism was suspected of adding to the taurobolium the sacrifice of human beings, which may have taken place in districts far removed from the capital.[1] To sum up, therefore, the incredibility of the crimes fathered upon the Christians gave them no protection because they were so common as to give no particular shock to the heathen conscience. As Minucius says (xxx. 1), 'Nemo hoc potest credere nisi qui possit audere.'

Tertullian, in his *Apologeticus*, vi., divides the charges against the Christians into two classes, those of secret and of open crimes.[2] It will be convenient to adopt this arrangement. In Tertullian the 'occulta facinora' are two, cannibalism and incest. Minucius as well as these mentions a third, the cult of the 'genitalia sacerdotis' (ix. 4). Nothing certain can be said of the precise grounds of these stories. The first of the crimes alleged against the Christians, that of cannibalism or Thyestean banquets, is associated in the accounts of Minucius and Tertullian with the initiation of neophytes (Min. ix.; Tert. *Apol.* viii.). A child concealed by a crust of flour is brought in to the novice, who, by direction, stabs it to death, not knowing what he is doing. Immediately the persons present drink the blood and make a feast on the flesh. In this way the oath to secrecy is sworn and the bond of union cemented. Perhaps the extravagant falsehood may be traced to confused ideas derived from

[1] Secrecy was essential in the Mithraistic brotherhood, and where dark caves could not be found the rites were celebrated in subterranean vaults.

[2] Secret crimes, cc. vii.–ix., open crimes x. f. The first book of the *ad Nationes* is devoted to refutation of charges.

infant baptism, the Passover sacrifice of a lamb, and the feast thereon with unleavened cakes among the Jews, and the Christian Eucharist of the Body and Blood of Christ. After the initiation by ritual murder and cannibalism, there followed, according to the gossips, the crime of Oedipus.[1] The source of this slander may be less complex. The Christian Agapai or love feasts were well known,[2] and suspicion probably attached to them firstly because of the name itself and secondly by the Christian appellations of 'brother' and 'sister' (Min. *Oct.* ix. 3). The Agape, of course, followed the celebration of the Eucharist. A scandal peculiar to Minucius is the supposed Christian cult of the 'genitalia sacerdotis.' The suggestion that such an impression might have been derived from the kneeling posture of a penitent before a priest has some probability (cf. Tert. *de Poenit.* ix.).

We now come to the 'manifesta facinora' which are broadly those springing from Christian innovations against the state. In Min. the heathen complaints are given in an undeveloped form. Tertullian presents them as well-considered indictments pushed to their logical conclusion. Caecilius (*Oct.* viii. 3, 4) supplies the heads of a number of grave complaints against the Christians, of which the first is that they are 'homines deploratae, inlicitae ac desperatae factionis' (viii. 3). The best reply to this is contained in the *Apology* of Tertullian (cc. xxxviii. xxxix.) who conclusively proves that the Christian assembly 'non est factio dicenda, sed curia' (xxxix.), that is to say, should not be called an illegal club, but a solemn lawful assembly. In the *Octavius* (xxxi. 6) the Christian contents himself with denying that his co-religionists are 'factiosi,' as their common object is goodness, and they are as innocuous when assembled in a body as they are in isolated units; which strikes us as being a very mild answer to the formidable and, if made out, fatal objection that the Christian sect was

[1] Fronto in his oration against Christians made a great deal of this (*Oct.* ix. 6).

[2] Celsus is too well-informed to give the slightest attention to wild and prurient gabbling. He regards the Agapai as the real bond of union, a harmless feast, not 'inhuman meals.'

really an illicit political society consisting of desperate characters federated by association in murder and cannibalism (viii. 3, 4). As early as Justin M. suspicion of having seditious aims had fallen upon the Church, and Justin finds it necessary to refute the charge that the Christians desired to establish an earthly kingdom (1 *Apol.* xi.). Celsus (Origen, *contra Celsum*, i. 1) says that the Christians are a disloyal faction, and brings down his general accusation to a legal issue by implying that every church is an illicit college. The law only tolerated clubs or 'colleges,' such as the trade gilds and burial societies, whose ends were strictly confined to mutual benefit, and all other associations were definitely pronounced illegal under Augustus. The 'collegia licita' met once a month for financial business, and at other times for worship of their patron deity or for banquets.[1] In the time of Severus burial societies were permitted outside Rome, and Tertullian (*Apol.* xxxix.) shows how the provincial Christians took advantage of the concession. Each congregation became professedly a philanthropic and burial society, having its 'arca' or common treasury chest to which a 'modica stips menstrua' was paid on a fixed day as a perfectly voluntary subscription, and, like other bodies of the kind, a 'coena,' called in this case the 'agape,' which began and ended with prayer. During the meal conversation was allowed, and there was sacred singing afterwards. The 'agape' was evidently a dinner held in the evening, and its occurrence would help to remove suspicion that the Christian 'college' was in any way abnormal. Nevertheless, the Christians did not escape the charge of being 'factiosi,' as we have seen both in Minucius and Tertullian, and in the latter the enemies of the faith have advanced it further to the degree of 'laesa maiestas' or high-treason (*Apol.* x.; cf. xxxv.–xxxvii.).

The second open crime alleged by the heathen in Minucius is that of sacrilege: 'templa ut busta despiciunt, deos despuunt, rident sacra, miserentur miseri (si fas est) sacerdotum' (viii. 4). The Christians scorn the temples as

[1] See C. Bigg, *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, 1913, p. 303.

being nothing more than monuments to the dead, insult the gods, ridicule the sacrifices, and affect to pity the priests. We do not find here the specific charge of atheism which appears in Justin M. (1 *Apol.* xvi.), nor does it occur in Tertullian[1] (*Apol.* x.). To these primary charges are appended in Minucius two other objections. The Christians are unpatriotic and unsociable. As regards lack of patriotism Caecilius says: 'honores et purpuras despiciunt' (viii. 4). The Christians are bad citizens, they despise honours and the magistracy, that is, they refuse to fill positions of honour and state (xxxi. 6).[2] If this be so, it is rather without point for Caecilius to say, as he does (xii. 7), that the Christians are mere rustics incapable 'intellegere civilia,' to comprehend public affairs. In Tertullian we again see the complaint of the heathen sharpened; the Christians are said to be 'infructuosi in negotiis,' unprofitable in matters of business (*Apol.* xlii.). He uses the fact of Christian indifference to the higher calls of citizenship to refute the charge of political motive. Gilds, he says, are prohibited because they foster political rivalries and so tend to bring about disruption in the state. But the Christian body ought to be recognised among the legal corporations because it is not guilty of this fault. The Christians are absolutely cold as regards fame and public position, therefore they need no party organisation. Nothing is more foreign to their taste than public life. 'Unam omnium rempublicam agnoscimus, mundum' (*Apol.* xxxviii.). Truly an example of an argument which evacuates the key position in order to defend a minor post.

The other complaint of Caecilius is that the Christians are unsociable (xii. 5). They do not attend theatrical entertainments, they are absent from the solemn processions ('pompae,' such as those at public funerals, triumphs, inauguration of the 'ludi circenses' when the images of the

[1] It is, however, the first charge which Athenagoras' *Embassy* (A.D. 176–177) disposes of. Celsus does not mention atheism, but says the Christians should either conform or take themselves off (Orig. *c. Cels.* VIII. lv.).

[2] A common objection. Cf. Tatian, *Oratio*, iv., Origen, *c. Celsum*, viii. 75.

gods were carried), and they are not to be found at the public banquets (like those at the anniversary of the Emperor's accession or after the election of magistrates). Here was a matter in which no amount of explanation could be adequate for the heathen mind and none without affront. With the Christian it was not his unsociability, of course, which kept him at home, but his conscience. There are times when principle cannot hope for anything but misunderstanding and misrepresentation.

We have seen that Minucius does not tabulate the second of Tertullian's ' manifesta facinora,' that of ' laesa maiestas,' while he contains the first, that of sacrilege. A third crime brought forward by Tertullian is that the Christians are said to be ' publici hostes ' (*Apol.* xxxv.), because they refuse to pay honours to the Emperor, they are a political faction, and they have brought great public calamities on the state owing to the anger of the gods outraged by them (*Apol.* xl., xli.). This last charge, that the very existence of the Christians is inimical to the empire, is entirely wanting in Minucius, although common enough. As we shall see when the relation between Minucius and Tertullian is discussed, this fact is of importance.

In the matter of heathen polemic against the doctrines of Christianity in the early age the outstanding figures are Caecilius and Celsus. The viewpoint of the former is old-fashioned, while that of the latter reveals contact with the revival of paganism which was to be a serious problem for the Church of succeeding generations. Although Caecilius does not attack with such intimate knowledge and in such detail, his opinions, as representative of those of a typical educated Roman of the period, are sufficiently interesting. To begin with he condemns the Christian religion generally as a ' superstition.' In his Epicurean mood he will not have ' religio,' let alone ' superstitio ' (v. 7), but after his advocacy of ' religio,' according to the Roman model, he calls Christianity ' vana et demens superstitio ' (ix. 2), and ends up his diatribe with ' anilis superstitio ' (xiii. 5). This recalls the words of Pliny ' prava superstitio ' (*Ep.* x. 97), and of Tacitus ' exitiabilis superstitio ' (*Ann.* xv. 44), in the

same connexion. According to the heathen view religion had degenerated into superstition when the bizarre appeared in its rites, or it was opposed to scientific fact, conduced to vice, or reduced its votaries to supernatural terrors. Cicero says that ' superstitio ' is a ' timor inanis deorum ' (*de Nat. Deor.* I. xlii. 117). Caecilius, then, is only saying what any Roman would say of Christianity when he describes it as a ' superstition.' With such a preoccupation he proceeds to arraign its dogmas, rites, and practices. Dogmas are to him, in his academic posture, altogether objectionable wherever or whatever they may be. He is more offended with the positiveness of the Christians than with the scandals about them. He has noted their unmoved confidence with a jaundiced eye. It is not enough to call, for instance, the dogma of the Resurrection an old woman's tale and a lie ; Caecilius must sneer at the perfect trust of the faithful, so complete that ' you would think that they had already lived again ' (xi. 2).

Taking his anti-Christian polemic in the classification adopted above, dogmas, rites, and practices, here is what he says about the Unity of God. This ' one, solitary forsaken God ' has not been recognised by any free people or kingdom, not even by the Romans, who have always been very generous in respect of foreign deities. What is his origin, nature, or abode ? His only votaries have been the Jews, and he shares the captivity of that miserable race under the Romans who are but men (x. 3, 4). Caecilius is quite clear on the fact that the Christian God is ' Deus Unicus.' It was well known to the heathen. Apuleius in describing the miller's wife, who was obviously a Christian, adds as an additional horror to her long catalogue of vices, that she said that God was ' deus unicus ' (*Metam.* ix. 14). Celsus will have nothing to do with the supremacy of God. He says that the idea of One God involves the existence of an enemy to Him, and therefore of divisions and factions in God's Kingdom (Orig. *c. Cels.* viii. 11). Of the attributes of God Caecilius knows that He is invisible, omniscient, and omnipresent. ' What portentous monstrosities do these Christians invent ! ' cries the pagan advocate indignantly,

'that this god of theirs, whom they can neither show nor see, scrupulously investigates the characters, actions, even the very words and secret thoughts of everybody, for he is running about and everywhere at hand. They represent him as meddling, restless, shamefully inquisitive, since he stands by when everything is done and wanders into every place. But he cannot be of service in particulars while distracted about the whole, nor can he suffice for all while his attention is given to details' (x. 5). Divine Creation is dismissed as having been emptied of probability by Epicurean speculation. The prime cause may have been the self-fructifying force of nature producing an aggregation of atoms, from the chance meeting of which issued the universe. But he knows what the Christian would have said, for he exclaims 'What god is author here? . . . who is the creating god?' (v. 7). To the doctrine of Divine Providence Caecilius replies that nature is unmoral (v. 9–13), borrowing from Cicero (*de N.D.* III. xxxii. 79) a quotation from Ennius to the effect that if the gods cared for men it would be well with the good and ill with the bad, which is not the case. The Christian God exercises no beneficent care even over his own people, allowing them to remain in want, toiling hard in hunger and cold. If he does not permit these sufferings he must be hiding his knowledge of them. It follows that either he will not or cannot intervene, that he is either helpless or unjust (xii. 2). This argument was a commonplace on the part of the heathen.[1] The Roman power, continues Caecilius, is supreme in the world, and holds sway also over the Christians without regard to the Christian God (xii. 5). The worship of Christ crucified seems to Caecilius to be only suitable to abandoned wretches deserving of the same treatment. He refers to Christ as a mere individual who suffered capital punishment (ix. 4). The pagan mind could not imagine the possibility of an immortal god dying, and even that a good man could have been crucified seemed to be incredible. Truly a good man might die for the sake of others, but why should this mode

[1] See references in the early Christian apologists given by Holden, *Min. Fel.* p. 82 n. 2.

of death be chosen, disgraceful even for a criminal who was a free man ? [1] Celsus is a much more dangerous disputant than Caecilius both in acuteness and knowledge, and therefore is not content with a vague attack upon the faith in Christ. To his mind Christ was an impostor, his miracles prove nothing, and his resurrection was either a mere hallucination on the part of his disciples or a calculated lie. The Christians are inconsistent in worshipping the One God and his servant Christ as well (Orig. *c. Cels.* viii. 12), which involves the belief that God's servants are to be adored as well as God himself (*ibid.* viii. 13). Christ is called the Son of God only to extol him and not to honour God (*ibid.* viii. 14). Celsus then goes on to quote from some mysterious Christian writing, probably heretical, called the 'Heavenly Dialogue,' to prove that the Christians place Christ above God the Father, and he also curiously interprets the saying 'no man can serve two masters' as being used by the Christians because they do not wish to serve the Supreme God but Jesus Christ only (*ibid.* viii. 15). Returning to Caecilius, he is certainly familiar with the doctrine of Election in its simplest form. 'Misled by this error (that of the resurrection),' he says, 'they (the Christians) promise themselves, as being the good people, a life of eternal blessedness after death, and to all others, as being unjust, perpetual punishment. . . . You (Christians) refer all that we do to God which others attribute to Fate. Consequently you hold that men do not espouse your sect of their own free will but because they are the elect. And so you imagine an unjust judge who punishes men for what they have been fated and not for that which they have intended to do' (xi. 5, 6). Caecilius understands Election as a crude belief that mankind has been arbitrarily divided by God into those that shall enjoy eternal happiness and those that shall suffer never-ending torments. It appears to him as the most reprehensible form of the doctrine of Fate. Another tenet upon which the heathen speaker animadverts with vigorous opposition is that of the Ekpurosis, or universal conflagration, at the end of the world.

[1] Cf. Lact. *Div. Inst.* iv. 26.

Such a dissolution of the established order in one vast holocaust is to him a ' furiosa opinio ' (xi. 2). But he must have said the same of the Stoics. What really arouses him is the special Christian contribution to a very old idea, that while the universal order, which is eternal, shall be destroyed, the Christians who have to die like other men, and leave the world going on as they found it, shall enjoy a rebirth. This, cries Caecilius, with affronted intelligence, is a ' twofold evil and a double folly ' (xi. 1–3). Similarly Celsus ridicules the belief that when the world perishes in flames the Christians will be saved (Orig. *c. Cels.* v. 14). The principal attack of Caecilius is, indeed, directed, after his negation of Providence, against the eschatological side of Christian teaching. Witness his polemic against the resurrection. The comforting thought of a life hereafter is a ' fallax spes ' (viii. 5). Rebirth after death is an ' anilis fabula ' and a ' mendacium ' (xi. 2). There follow three arguments to disprove the doctrine of life after death. Firstly, is the resurrection with the body or without a body ? [1] If without a body, this would imply no mind, no soul, no life.[2] If with a body, this must be either the old one or a new one. But the old one has already long ago been dissolved, and a new body would not be the restoration of the former man but the birth of a new man (xi. 7). The fallacy of the last inference lies in the assumption that the dissolution of the body renders its identical revival impossible. The views of Celsus are interesting here. He treats the Christian hope as a subject particularly open to ridicule. The doctrine of the resurrection has been derived from that of metempsychosis. It is not only impossible but it is also loathsome. The soul cannot desire to return to the corrupt body (Orig. *c. Cels.* v. 14). To the contention that God is almighty Celsus replied that He cannot do anything that is shameful and unnatural. At the back of

[1] ' An absque corporibus ' is not in the text of the MS. and has apparently been omitted by accident (xi. 7).

[2] Caecilius has in mind the contention of Velleius against Plato's opinion that God is without a body. The Epicurean says that the idea is not intelligible since it would deprive God of sense, prudence, and pleasure. Cicero, *de N.D.* I. xii. 30.

the heathen's mind, however, is the conviction that the flesh is altogether vile. One fact emerges clearly. Both these controversialists understood perfectly that the Christians taught the resurrection of the body actually and really, in fact, the resurrection of the flesh. Early testimony is derived from the Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne (Euseb. *H.E.* v. 1) in 177 during the persecution in Gaul under M. Aurelius. We are informed that the oppressors took the most careful measures to prevent the Christians obtaining the bodies of the martyrs for the purpose of burial, and finally burned the remains to ashes and flung the dust into the Rhone 'that they might not have any hope of rising again,' as they said.

The second argument of Caecilius is that in all the long succession of the ages there is no instance of such a resurrection having taken place.[1] It is a mere figment of an unhealthy imagination, a foolish consolation hashed up by the Christians from the inventive flights of poets (xi. 8, 9). Thirdly, their present condition in this world proves how empty and broken are the avowals of the Christians of a future life. Poverty with hard toil is the lot of most of them, while they are subject, in common with the rest of humanity, to the same weakness in illness and pain (xii. 1–3).

About future punishments Caecilius says little. The Christians fear them, and also dread a second death, if the latter be not taken as simply an oratorical embellishment (viii. 5). The non-elect are doomed to eternal pains (xi. 5). In Celsus the wicked are to be destroyed by fire at the second advent (Orig. *c. Cels.* iv. 23 ; cf. iv. 11).

The Christian rites are assailed both from the positive and negative side. Negatively, Caecilius objects that the Christians have no altars or temples, which even the Jews possess, no known statues of the objects of their worship (x. 2, 4). He is obviously almost completely in the dark when he comes to speak of such ceremonies as he thinks he knows something about. Baptism, for instance, becomes with him an initiation by child sacrifice (ix. 5). Probably

[1] Cf. Justin M., 2 *Apol.* p. 65 ; Theoph. *ad Autol.* i. 13 ; Lact. *Div. Inst.* VII. xxii. 10, where he is indebted to Min.

the 'nocturnal gatherings' (viii. 4) are for the Agapai which were held in the evening, as lights were necessary (ix. 6, 7).[1] Two distinctive cults (in addition to that of the 'genitalia sacerdotis') are foisted upon the Christians, ass-worship and staurolatria. Tertullian (*Apol.* xvi) adds that some regard the Sun as being the Christian God, and he does not consider the notion to be extraordinary, since it was probably derived from the Christian custom of praying towards the East, and from the observance of Sunday as a festival. Minucius has nothing of this, but he agrees with Tertullian on the former cults. 'I understand,' says Caecilius, 'that they consecrate and adore the head of a most vile animal, the ass, under the influence of I do not know what absurd belief' (*Oct.* ix. 3). Where the heathen obtained such a stupid opinion is hard to say. Some form of ass-veneration was certainly connected with the cult of Isis, as Octavius in his reply does not fail to remark (xxviii. 7). Perhaps the Romans confused the Jews with the Egyptians in this respect. Tacitus even gravely proposes to furnish the origin of the Jewish ass-cult, but his explanation is childish (*Hist.* v. 4). The heathen were much mystified by the abstract notions of Jewish theology, in spite of the fact that Judaism even became a vogue in Nero's reign. Jehovah was, in the opinion of Juvenal (*Sat.* xiv. 97), merely the clouds and the sky, and according to Lucan (*Phars.* ii. 592) He was an uncertain divinity. The Jewish religious language was incomprehensible to the Romans, and their mistakes probably arose more from their own ignorance than from any deliberate obscurity on the part of both Jews and Christians. It is not therefore very surprising that in Tertullian's time, probably in Carthage, a picture of the God of the Christians was hawked about, representing a human figure in a toga, adorned with ass's ears and hoofed in one foot. This scurrilous effort boasted an inscription 'the God of the Christians conceived of an ass' (*Apol.* xvi.). We are reminded of the graffito scrawled

[1] Justin M.'s account of the Eucharist shows that the Agape had been separated from it. In Pliny's letter to Trajan the solemn regular service takes place before dawn, and the common meals are held at another time.

on a wall on the Palatine at Rome, found in 1856, the work of some domestic probably, who, with as little sense of decency as artistic gift, desired to lampoon a colleague. On a cross is depicted an ass-headed man, the object of adoration by one Alexamenos, whose name is scribbled below, with the intimation in Greek, that he 'worships God.' Curiously enough Origen thinks it worth while to give his view of the origin of the fable. Celsus had said (Orig. *c. Cels.* vi.) that he had seen a Christian scheme of seven heavenly beings represented by animal forms, one with the face of an ass, all of which animal spirits were worshipped by the Christians, especially the last. Origen opines that Celsus is confusing Christians with a certain religious sect. However, there was some Christian symbolism of an analogous kind, as is evident from the description of the four beasts in heaven in the Book of the Revelation. Caecilius assumes as being true the story that 'Crucis ligna feralia' are venerated by Christians (ix. 4), and again (xii. 4) threatens 'non adorandae sed subeundae cruces.'[1] The reply (xxix. 6–8) is a simple denial, 'we do not worship crosses,' with a retort in which, among other things, he refers to the 'signa' (eagles of the legions) and the 'vexilla' (standards of the cavalry) as being none other than gilded and decorated crosses, and he was right in reminding his heathen friend of these, as they were proper objects of veneration in the Roman army. Constantine made use of this when he invented the Labarum. He took the ordinary vexillum, a small square banner hung transversely across the end of a spear, and put on the spear-head the monogram of Christ. Octavius does not deny that the sign of the cross was a sacred symbol, for he argues that it is a perfectly natural one, and mentions a beautiful reason, that a man forms this figure when praying to God with outstretched hands. There is yet a further complaint on the part of Caecilius with respect to Christian worship. Virtue loves the light of day but vice prefers darkness. The Christians take most careful pains to conceal their rites. They have,

[1] Christians were charged with cross-worship as late as Julian the Apostate. See Cyril, *contra Iulian.* vi.

for instance, no public religious buildings, no sacrificial altars, and even no statues that any one has ever seen (x. 2). Caecilius is right, and later on his statement is freely accepted as fact. The early Christians eschewed temples along with pagan altars and images, and only in the middle of the third century did they build churches. Up to that time they were accustomed to meet in other places (ix. 1).

Some of the practices of the Christians are also singled out for the heavy frown of the heathen interlocutor. First in importance comes the rejection by them of cremation. They believe that although the universe shall be utterly consumed in flames, they themselves shall enjoy a rebirth from their remains. One can understand, therefore, why these people object to the funeral pyre : they are afraid of the destruction of the body lest it should imperil their resurrection, a manifest absurdity surely. Whatever be the immediate process of dissolution, it comes to the same thing that all bodies are reduced to dust. But if it be imagined that the dead are still capable of feeling pain, then any kind of burial must produce suffering.[1] On the other hand, if the dead are deprived of sensation it must be admitted that the swiftness of cremation is to be preferred as the most salutary method of disposal.[2] So the remarks of Caecilius may be paraphrased (xi. 4). He cannot be regarded as representing the only view taken by the Romans, for Cicero approves inhumation (*de Legg.* ii. 25), and Pliny says that earth burial and not cremation was the ancient custom of the Romans (*H. N.* vii. 54). The speaker in the *Octavius* is indeed only so vigorous in opposition to the Christian insistence upon inhumation because he is persuaded that it is a corollary of the dogma of the resurrection. How far he is wrong is shown by the concise answer of the Christian : ' we are not in the least afraid of losing anything through cremation, but we follow the older and better custom of earth burial ' (xxxiv. 10). Why Octavius thought it to be

[1] An echo of Seneca, *de Rem. fort.* v. 1–2.

[2] ' ipsa conficiendi celeritate medicina.' It is not quite clear whether Caecilius means that cremation is good for the corpse or more healthful with reference to the living. The thought in his mind is that burning prevents decay.

better he does not say. There were reasons which he could have urged, but they would hardly have convinced the heathen public. Connected with the definite rejection of the pagan pyre was the refusal by Christians to deck the tombs of the dead with floral crowns, which to Caecilius appears extraordinary (xii. 6). Octavius retorts upon him with a dilemma. Either the dead can feel or they cannot. If they can, why do you burn them ; if they cannot, what reason is there in crowning them ? Consequently Christians do not place floral wreaths upon the heads of the defunct (xxxviii. 3).[1] Neither would they wear flowers on their heads in life, an innocent pleasure to the mind of Caecilius (xii. 6), but the significance lay in the pagan custom of assuming such adornments at sacrifices and festivals. Octavius again does not condemn the use on this ground, but prefers to make a rather feeble but conventional jest among the Christian apologists to the effect that ' there is no organ of smell on the pate or in the hair ' (xxxviii. 2). He is emphatic, however, on the point that Christians do love the flowers of spring, and joyfully pluck the rose and the lily, fully conscious of their sweet scents and beautiful colours. As to use, the flowers are placed about individually, or woven into delicate garlands to be worn round the neck (xxxviii. 2). A cognate peculiarity, to the mind of Caecilius, is the restriction of perfumed ointments to funeral arrangements. Old Roman use employed these for the dead as for the living, but apparently the Christians, in a puritanical manner, would not allow perfumes for the skin during life. We should probably agree that they were justified in their revolt against the abuse of harmless things by the sensual society of that time. Why ' solemn fasts ' should be considered to be criminal like ' inhuman meals ' (viii. 4) seems at first to be rather odd. Probably Caecilius sees these particular fasts from the point of view of their being unnaturally severe. He is alluding to the ' stationes militum Christi,' the solemn watches as of soldiers on guard duty, on Wednesdays and Fridays, observed as weekly fasts.

[1] Flowers which inevitably fade seemed to be an unsuitable symbol of the evergreen freshness of eternal life (xxxviii. 4).

Finally, the heathen advocate is firmly convinced that the Christian brotherhood employs not the sign of the cross but some peculiar mark on the body somewhere in order to facilitate mutual recognition. Octavius (xxxi. 8) so understands him, but refrains from explaining that the idea may have originated in Christians being observed to use frequently the sign of the cross which Tertullian describes (*de Corona*, iii). It would almost seem that Minucius wished to maintain a reserve on this as on other points.

Whether Minucius in the *Octavius* had the intention of refuting the famous orator M. Cornelius Fronto (A.D. 100–175) of Cirta, once so much admired by the Emperor M. Aurelius, and the founder of a popular style in Latin prose, is an interesting speculation dependent on how far our author may be presumed to have made use of an oration by Fronto against the Christians which is not now extant. Does the speech of Caecilius reproduce the substance of the discourse of Fronto, as some authorities believe ? We begin with the textual grounds of the supposition. On the subject of the reported indecencies at the Christian banquets Caecilius calls in evidence an oration of a fellow citizen of Cirta : ' Et de convivio notum est : passim omnes locuntur, id etiam Cirtensis nostri testatur oratio ' (ix. 6). The orator referred to is Fronto, as is seen by the reply of Octavius (xxxi. 2). ' De incesto convivio ' Octavius begins by remarking that the lie had been circulated with the deliberate purpose of prejudicing men's minds before they could have an opportunity of learning the truth,[1] and continues : ' Sic de isto et tuus Fronto non ut adfirmator testimonium fecit, sed convicium ut orator adspersit,' that is to say, substantially, ' what your countryman Fronto stated cannot be accepted as fact, but is mere oratorical abuse.' Fronto had attested the truth of his charge professionally, as a declaimer, to whom rhetorical licence as regards fact was allowable. Minucius is fully aware of this, and of the character of Fronto, who was so notorious for inaccuracies that the emperor M. Aurelius remarks on his distinction as a liar (Fronto, *ad M. Caes.* ii. 3). A third

[1] Cf. Tert. *Apol.* vii.

passage has been brought forward by M. Schanz (*Rhein. Mus.* l. 1895, pp. 114–137 ; *Röm. Litteraturgesch.* iii. 1896, pp. 229–239 ; 1905 edit. of latter, iii. p. 272) which he uses with the others to reach conclusions upon both the purpose and the date of the *Octavius*. He is convinced that in c. xiv. 1 Caecilius refers to Fronto : ' Ecquid ad haec, ait, audet Octavius, homo Plautinae prosapiae, ut pistorum praecipuus, ita postremus philosophorum,' a passage which has been variously rendered, but which, as we have seen, probably amounts to this : ' Has Octavius, one of the lawyer tribe, a principal man among drudges,[1] but in the last rank of philosophers, anything to say to this ? ' It is the tit for tat of Caecilius in reply to what he considered as being a snobbish remark on the part of Octavius (iii. 1). M. Schanz, however, will not have this perfectly natural explanation, but, preoccupied with the idea that Fronto is the ' homo Plautinae prosapiae,' insists upon expunging the name Octavius from the text. Schanz's argument is, briefly, that in face of the admitted fact that the *Octavius* contains comparatively so little that is specifically Christian there must be some definite reason to account for it. He dismisses as untenable the suppositions that either Minucius only desired to furnish a preparation for Christianity, or that, as a new convert, he states all that he really knows, or that, as a philosopher, he prefers to present Christianity in his own way. The explanation must be that the *Octavius* is not a Christian apology in the general sense at all, but one that is based upon some definite text which demanded limitation to a certain line of defence. This document which Minucius has before him is none other than the speech of Fronto twice referred to in the *Octavius*. Confirmation of this view is found in the passage xiv. 1, where the name Octavius is an interpolation. Caecilius has a tilt at Fronto. He says: ' What does the greatest of the Plautines but the last of the philosophers venture to say to this ? ' Fronto, of course, was the founder of a style of Latin prose which borrowed words from Plautus and other old writers, and which was highly artificial. Caecilius

[1] That is, among the Christians.

challenges Fronto to a contest on the score of form. He even pokes fun at Fronto's personality who in fact, though 'the head of the Plautines,' was really 'a very simple fellow,' as we see from his letters. Schanz therefore thinks that while Caecilius is willing enough to make use of Fronto for matter, and cite him respectfully as an authority at that, he turns round with an impish twist, in the face of the adversary, and proceeds to gibe at the foremost man on his own side, calling upon Fronto to make a better speech if he can! Surely Minucius was too finished an artist so to outrage probability. No case has been made out to justify an alteration in the text, and Schanz's hypothesis has received but little support.[1]

An attractive view has been more recently put forward by S. Colombo in the course of an article on the sources of Minucius Felix (*Didaskaleion*, pp. 79–121). Caecilius, after more or less following Cicero for his general views upon religion, wishes to attack Christianity expressly, but feels the need of some introductory matter in order to effect the transition. He therefore in vi. 1 ff. adopts the religious views of Fronto, affirming tradition and explaining the existence of the gods after a rationalistic manner. Then in c. viii. comes the invective against the Christians, in which Caecilius closely follows and partly transcribes the speech of Fronto, but developing it and showing a lack of historical reality, subordinating everything to an over-mastering passion for style. Special dependence on Fronto appears in c. ix. and continues until the end of c. xiii., in which section a considerable part of Fronto's assault has been reproduced, displaying three distinct marks, that is to say, in contrast with the centonistic character of the rest of the work we have a uniformity of aspect and intonation, we have the reference to Fronto's oration 'id etiam Cirtensis nostri testatur oratio,' and also traces of Africanisms in style are found, all of which point to the following of an

[1] How can Caecilius address Fronto in this place when he is speaking to Octavius, and it is the latter who must and does give him his reply? Moreover Minucius, the umpire, understands Caecilius to have spoken of Octavius in xiv. 1.

original.[1] The argument from style satisfied J. E. Renan, the boldest partisan of the Frontonian theory, some years before (*Marc Aurèle*, 1882, p. 390). According to him Minucius, struck by the work of his fellow countryman Fronto against the Christians, wished to reply to the attack. He purposely wrote in a style somewhat resembling that of the illustrious orator, and made more than one borrowing from him. Renan remarks that there is much analogy between the fine amplification in chapters ii. iii. iv. (the narrative of the introduction, in which the stage of the dialogue is set), and the correspondence between M. Aurelius and Fronto, while the discourse of Caecilius is more Frontonian in style than the rest of the book. Renan concludes that that discourse is almost a textual reproduction of the speech of Fronto.[2] Is it possible that there is in the oration of Caecilius a fusion of polemic? He has arrived at what may be his climax in viii. 3, 4. With a polite apology he sums up very briefly his charges against the Christians, and perhaps his speech would stand by omitting ix.–xii. and concluding with xiii. Two reasons might allow us to consider this. The omitted section goes over the ground of viii. 3, 4 more or less in detail. Perhaps Minucius, wishing to expand the original draft of his dialogue, thought it advisable to go to Fronto in order to provide more exact material for refutation. Again, in viii. 4 the Christians are represented as being of little importance, while in ix. 1 the gravity of the daily increase in numbers leaps suddenly out into alarming significance. We might even narrow the Frontonian section down to c. ix., in which appear the highly coloured accounts of the supposed initiation rite and banquets of the Christians, which stand out from the rest of the speech of Caecilius in graphic power and finish. And as if Minucius were unwilling to follow Fronto any further in that orator's relish for prurience in the rôle of purity campaigner, he makes Caecilius say in x. 1: 'I am purposely

[1] We may add that the second part of the speech of Caecilius reads exactly as if the case were regularly before the court in a definite action which provoked violent general charges.

[2] René Pichon, *Lactance*, says that the speech of Caecilius is an imitation of Cicero for its philosophy, and of Fronto for its polemic.

leaving out a great deal, for what I have said already is too much.' A further contraction would leave only the story of the incestuous banquets as the contribution of Fronto, for which he is undoubtedly cited as a witness. We can now pass to what two French critics have to say. Monceaux (*op. cit.* p. 488) writes that the hypothesis that the speech of Caecilius is a simple adaptation of a discourse of Fronto belongs, unfortunately, to those which it is impossible to estimate. If Fronto had wished to attack the Christians he could have done so in the course of a brief whenever a Christian came before the court. Perhaps the discourse of Fronto never even existed. All that Caecilius has to say against the Christians belongs only to the commonplaces of apologetics, and is only remarkable because it is here placed solely from the Pagan point of view.

L. Massebieau (*Revue de l'histoire des religions*, xv. 1887, art. pp. 316–346) is quite ready to give a place to Fronto among the sources of Minucius, but cautions us that what is said of Fronto is so little that it cannot signify much, and we may ignore the importance of him as a source. Nevertheless Massebieau admits that Fronto did write a discourse against the Christians, and that Minucius has it in view from one end to the other in his treatise. We are much more inclined to agree with Massebieau than with Monceaux on this point, but would go a little further and say that we think that c. ix. probably belongs to Fronto for the reasons above given, leaving the rest open to question. Minucius had certainly read Fronto's speech.[1]

P Monceaux has the same to say about the hypothesis that the *Octavius* is an answer to Celsus as he has in the case of Fronto, that it is outside serious estimate and is superfluous. We shall see if Celsus may be abandoned more easily than Fronto.

Probably in the year A.D. 248, near the end of the short reign of Philippus Arabs,[2] the thousandth anniversary of

[1] Fronto may have written a speech for the purpose of a debate or an oratorical exercise, and Minucius, with others, might have studied it in the course of their training for the bar.

[2] Tradition asserts that this Emperor was a Christian, but some authorities doubt it. Niebuhr, however, thinks that he was a catechumen, and was baptised shortly before his death.

the foundation of the city of Rome, the greatest apologetic work of the early Church was composed by Origen, entitled *Against Celsus,* in eight books. A friend of Origen, one Ambrosius of Alexandria, had come across a remarkable book written long before by a heathen named Celsus under the heading *True Demonstration,* which made an uncommonly shrewd attack upon the Christian faith. Accordingly Ambrosius forthwith transmitted the copy to Origen with a request that he should publish a refutation. At first the latter felt somewhat disinclined to comply. He tells us that he thought that the facts of the Christian life were really the best defence against attack, and that formal refutation of accusations only weakened the strength of the Christian case. But Origen was evidently deeply impressed, as he read on, by the gravity of the assault made by Celsus, with the result that he determined to give an answer, saying that although he did not write his apology for the sound in faith, yet he undertook to do so for the sake of those who had been shaken by the arguments of Celsus, and for those who were totally ignorant (Origen, *contra Celsum,* Pref. 4). His method is to follow Celsus line by line with great tenacity, so that most of what the heathen said is either quoted or epitomised for the purpose of a detailed reply which is admirable for its sincerity and learning. Its only defect arises from a lack of directness from time to time in coming to grips with the main question.[1]

Of Celsus himself Origen does not appear to know any more than we do. There are several writers of the same name, one of whom Origen had perhaps read, who wrote a book *On Wizards* (i. 68). He it may have been who figures in the dedication of a book of a similar character by the witty but licentious Lucian, whose *floruit* was in the reign of M. Aurelius. However, except that the Celsus of the *True Demonstration* appears to be far too serious a man to have been the friend of Lucian, the internal evidence of his date makes it quite possible. Some see references to a

[1] Edition by P. Koetschau, Leipzig, 1899; printed also in Migne, *P.G.* xi. 641–1632. There is an Eng. trans. in *Ante-Nicene Christian Fathers,* 23. See J. Geffcken, *Zwei Griechische Apologeten,* 256–266, Leipzig, 1906. On the date of Celsus see J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers,* 2. vol. 1, p. 530 f; C. Bigg, *Neoplatonism,* p. 101.

supposed rescript of M. Aurelius in 177 ordering Christians to be sought out (viii. 69), and to two emperors reigning at the same time, pointing to the joint rule of M. Aurelius and Commodus, 177–180 (viii. 71). The general agreement is to place the date of the book of Celsus in 178, just after the persecution of the Christians at Lyons and Vienne. We might, therefore, consider Celsus and Minucius to have been contemporaries, if we are satisfied that Minucius was thus early. The special knowledge which Celsus has of Egyptian matters, and the fact that the Jew who is put forward by him has a knowledge of the doctrine of the Logos, speaking more like an Alexandrian than a Roman Jew, suggests that Alexandria was the place where the book was composed. It appears to have consisted of two main divisions, in the first of which he attacks Christianity in the person of a Jew who repudiates Christ, and in the second he speaks in his own person in a philosophical and detailed polemic which winds up with a call to patriotism. The greater part of his work was reconstructed in German in 1873 by Th. Keim, and in 1878 by B. Aubé in French.[1] The original Greek has been reconstructed by Neumann.

Celsus was a man of considerable education, who had travelled widely, with a taste for religious knowledge. He had a special interest in Christianity, and must have obtained much information by means of personal intercourse with Christians. He was familiar with Genesis and Exodus, and refers to Jonah and Daniel. He knew the four Gospels, and, perhaps, also the Pauline Epistles. Gnosticism especially had come within his purview. Celsus, in addition, had read the dialogue of Aristo of Pella between Jason a Hebrew Christian and Papiscus an Alexandrian Jew, in which Jesus was proved from prophecy to be the Christ, for he cites it (iv. 52).[2] The assault of Celsus upon the Church is made with intelligence. He is too wise or too well informed to repeat vulgar and unfounded slanders, and he will not allow his bias to blind him altogether to obvious facts, such as the

[1] ' La polémique païenne à la fin du deuxième siècle' (*Hist. des pers.* ii.).

[2] He had also read a Christian writing, probably Gnostic, called *The Heavenly Dialogue* (viii. 15).

purity of Christian morals. This would allow him a respectful hearing in the better circles. But he adds a charge that was grave enough in those days of credulity and quackery, that of the Christians being addicted to sorcery (i. 6, 68; vi. 39), and he gives a keener edge to that objection which already rankled in the Roman mind, that the Christians are unpatriotic (viii. 2, 21) and that every Christian congregation is in fact an illicit club (i. 1, 7). In his opinion there is nothing original in Christianity; it is in fact a religious plagiarism. Christ, according to him, as we have seen, was not divine, His miracles were only tricks, and His resurrection at the best a mere hallucination. Christian eschatology is full of incredibilities.[1] Strauss and Renan have said little more. Perhaps, too, they only stole the Celsian thunder, as Porphyry, Julian, and Hierocles in ages past had done. Doubtless Celsus is weighty, but as we read him now he sometimes goes wool-gathering, and is guilty of such absurd statements as that Christ had read Plato. He has, however, although an adversary, some historic value as regards early Christian belief, as Harnack recognises in his 'History of Dogma.' Celsus, indeed, all unconsciously, has proved to be much more than a critic, but even a most effective defender of the side he attacked, since he tells us enough about the Church of his times to show that it was in essentials the same then as now. He is not conscious of any difference in the Church on such articles of the creed as those with which he deals, the Incarnation, Descent into Hell, the Resurrection. With regard to our Gospels he knows the four we have and those only.[2] Celsus has also another great value which he shares with Caecilius, showing as he does what an enlightened and educated heathen thought of Christianity in those very early times. His own philosophic bent was towards an eclectic Platonism and not, as Origen thought, in his horror at the apparent atheism of Celsus, towards the doctrines of Epicurus. Celsus is like Caecilius in that below his scepticism and mockery there is something

[1] Celsus also anticipated some of the familiar objections of modern rationalists to the Bible.

[2] C. Bigg, *Neoplatonism*, vi.

more solid, as is so often the case with those who would pass for men of the world. But Caecilius adopts no system of religious belief, whereas Celsus is feeling his way towards the Neo-Platonist movement first exemplified in Plotinus nearly half a century later, that is, he was one of those who sought to save religion by means of a spiritual philosophy of a syncretic kind. Celsus cannot, however, be fully accounted to be a philosopher, because he is deficient in system and lacks sympathy, yet he is an enlightened advocate of the reformed Paganism.[1] He believes in One God, who is nameless, thus far agreeing with the Christian Octavius. God made the world perfect in all its parts, including mankind, and then handed its government and support over to inferior deities called demons, to whom man's gratitude on account of their benefits, and man's worship are due, through them honouring God Himself. The Supreme God is perfectly good and just, therefore He cannot pity. Men may alter their attitude to Him but He cannot vary towards them. In fact the God of Celsus is the old familiar conception of Pure Intelligence.[2] As for man he enjoys no particularly favoured position in creation. He is one of and no better than the animals, and God could be no more angry with him than with an ape. The demons occupy a very important place in the religious system of Celsus, their functions being broadly that of mediators between God and man. In this Celsus and his school may have been influenced by the mediatorial doctrine of Christianity.[3] Perhaps, too, Celsus had learned something from his adversaries about the absurdity of idol worship. He clearly distinguishes the image itself from the god who is honoured thereby, and quotes Heraclitus on the futility of praying to an image when the god is unknown (vii. 62). Here Celsus is conscious of the necessity of some explanation of the senseless sacrifices to idols.

What was it that moved Celsus to write such a serious

[1] C. Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, 1913, p. 302.

[2] Bigg, *op. cit.* p. 305.

[3] Bigg, *op. cit.* p. 308. See him also for a general account of the views of Celsus ; also Foakes Jackson, *A History of the Christian Church*, pp. 198, 199, and his reference to Baur, *Church Hist.* ii. 140–167.

composition? We have noted that he ignores the popular charge of immorality against the Christians, and another unusual circumstance is that he does not call them atheists. The first charge that he does make is that of forming secret illicit associations, and significantly the last thing he does is to appeal for an understanding, urging the Christians to 'take office in the government of the country, if that is required for the maintenance of the laws and the support of religion,' helping the emperor to maintain justice and being ready to fight under him. Can it be that Celsus foresaw that an antagonised and ever-growing community within the Empire was sure to break it asunder in the end, unless some *modus vivendi* could be reached? It may well be so. This might have been his ultimate object, but another and more immediate cause has been seen. Robinson (*op. cit.* p. 9) suggested that it was at least a fair question whether Aristides (who presented an apology not to Hadrian, as Eusebius supposed, but probably to Antoninus Pius) was not one of those to whom Celsus replied. The same scholar (p. 20) notices that a leading belief of Aristides is that God made the world for man, and on this belief Celsus pours scorn. Moreover (p. 23) no early Christian writer has so ridiculed the Egyptian superstitions as Aristides, and we see that Celsus is particularly angry with the Christians on this score. Since Robinson another critic has boldly maintained that Aristides is the source for Celsus, who follows Aristides point by point in a text closely agreeing with the Syriac version of the apology.[1]

Th. Keim in 1873 published a work on Celsus (*Celsus Wahres Wort*) which thirty years later was described by a compatriot as 'altogether antiquated.'[2] Certainly Keim is often disappointing, but he cleared the way for others, and he has received distinguished support for his contention that Minucius obtained material from Celsus.[3] On the other hand F. Wilhelm (in *Breslauer Philol. Abhandl.* 1887,

[1] J. Rendel Harris, *Celsus and Aristides*, 1921, p. 12.

[2] J. Geffcken, *op. cit.* 1907, p. 256.

[3] B. Dombart, *Ein Dialog des M. F.*, 1881, pref. 9; G. Lösche, *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.* iv. (1882), p. 169; R. Kühn, *Der Oct. des M. F.*, Diss. Leipzig, 1882. But the balance of critical opinion is not on this side.

pp. 73–76), after taking most of the passages which Keim compares, confidently denies that Minucius has used Celsus. We shall now look at this comparison for ourselves which Keim formulates (pp. 157, 158). The connexion, he says, between Minucius and Celsus may be definitely stated from the following (12) points :

1. The rightness of the old religion and its equality to the new.

Caecilius (vi. 1) : how much better is it to accept the teaching of our ancestors as the high-priest of truth and to observe traditional religion ? Celsus (vii. 41) advises the Christians to turn to the divinely inspired poets, the wise men and the philosophers for guidance. Caec. (vi. 1) : every empire, province, and town has its own national cult and worships the gods of its own community. Antiquity (vi. 3) attaches sanctity to ceremonies and temples in proportion to their age. So ancient (viii. 1), so useful, so salutary a religion. Celsus (i. 14) speaks of the ancient instruction from above, and of the general relationship of doctrine among all nations. [Add Celsus v. 34, where he gives examples of the worship of national gods with the object, remarks Origen (v. 35), of leading to the conclusion that it is an obligation upon all men to live according to the customs of their country.[1]] Caec. (vii. 6) expatiates on the good done by the divinely inspired seers who afford warning, healing, hope, help, and comfort. Celsus (viii. 45) boasts of the benefits conferred by the oracles when obeyed, prosperity, children, and restoration of the use of injured limbs.

2. Christianity in unfavourable contrast.

Caecilius (viii. 3) : the Christians are men of a deplorable, unlawful and desperate faction ; (ix. 1) an impious association which ought to be utterly exterminated and execrated. Celsus (i. 1) describes the Christian congregations as being prohibited associations, and says (viii. 55) that if the Christians will not serve the gods, let them depart

[1] The portions below enclosed in square brackets are also supplementary to Keim.

hence with all speed and leave no posterity behind. Caecilius (x. 1) : Christianity is enveloped in the mysteriousness of a corrupt cult ; (ix. 2) its votaries recognise each other by secret marks and signs, and (ix. 5) it is by child-sacrifice that members are joined together, and they are pledged to mutual silence by complicity in this crime. Celsus (i. 1) objects to Christianity as a secret and therefore unlawful society, wishing to bring into disrepute the Christian love-feasts as the binding ceremony. He says also (viii. 17) that the possession of no temples, altars, or images is the badge agreed upon by the Christians, as for a forbidden secret society.[1]

3. Christianity is ridiculous.

Caec. (xi. 2) : the frantic opinion of the Christians about the burning up of the world is enriched by old women s tales about rebirth after death. They are (xi. 9) fictions of an unhealthy imagination, foolish consolations. (v. 6) Caecilius advocates avoidance of empty and terrifying conjectures about creation. (ix. 2) Christianity is a vain and mad superstition glorying in its crimes. (xii. 3) Christians indulge in dreams about a posthumous immortality. [Celsus on this head, *passim*.]

4. The credulity of the Christians.

Caec. (v. 3) : weary of a thorough search after truth some people give in rashly to any opinion whatever ; (viii. 4) the Christians are recruited from the lowest dregs of the populace, and from credulous women whose sex makes them easy subjects ; (xi. 2) with I do not know what self-confidence they believe each other's lies ; (ix. 3) an inexplicable belief induces them. [Celsus also laughs at the credulity of the Christians, but without verbal agreement with Caecilius. He makes a point of their teaching being particularly attractive to the unlearned (i. 27 ; iii. 44 ; iii. 49, 50). Foolish and ignorant persons, women and children, the broken in heart or reputation, are preferred

[1] Caec. (x. 2) asks why the Christians have no temples, altars, or images that are known of, unless it is that their cult is liable to punishment or is shameful.

by the propagandists. So we may sum up Celsus who only repeats what the heathen usually said on the subject.[1]]

5. The Christian numbers drawn from the masses.

Caec. (v. 4) : persons who are unlettered, strangers to literary culture, with no knowledge even of manual arts ; (viii. 4) recruited from the most ignorant and the very dregs ; (xii. 7) destitute of instruction or cultivation, barbarous and boorish. Like all the worst things (ix. 1) the Christians increase in numbers every day (cf. xxxiii. 1). [Celsus : compare preceding point. He says (iii. 44) that the Christians consist of the more ignorant, and that they lay down a rule that no instructed or wise person shall be admitted, but only the ignorant and foolish, showing in this way that they only intend to gain the silly, mean, and stupid, with women and children. In iii. 10 he complains of their growing numbers. This, too, is a commonplace with the pagan adversary, as we see, for instance, in Tertullian, *Apol.* i. cf. xxxvii. Pliny, *Epistles*, x. 96, says in A.D. 112 that the problem of the Christians in Bithynia is especially pressing owing to their numbers, but he honestly admits that in his province they belonged not to one but to every rank.]

6. The Christian passion for philosophising and misuse of the Greek philosophers and poets.

Caec. (viii. 2) speaks of the sham philosophy of those who deny the existence of the gods. Compare xxxiv. 5, where the Christian denies that his sect has merely walked in the tracks left by the philosophers. Caec. (xi. 9) says that certain beliefs derived from the poets have been unscrupulously worked up in order to attach them to the Christian God ; (xiii. 1) an itch for philosophising ; (v. 4) giving a definite opinion on the universe and its majesty, a subject upon which philosophy of many schools has deliberated for so many ages and still does so ; (xii. 7) people to whom it has not been given to understand ordinary affairs, and still less capable of discussing things divine.

[1] Compare Justin 2 *Apol.* x. ; Lucian, *Peregr.* xiii. ; Tatian, *Address to Greeks*, xxxiii. ; Athenagoras, *Supplicatio* xi.

Celsus (vii. 58) says that the Christians have borrowed and corrupted truths from the philosophers, and to this end quotes Socrates in Plato's *Crito*, in which it is laid down that evil should not be returned for evil. This instance, he remarks, is enough. More could be found if desired.[1]

7. Objections to Christian theology.

Caec. (x. 3) asks what is the origin, nature, abode of that One, solitary, deserted God recognised by no nation except (x. 4) by the shunned and pitiable race of Jews? And He is so weak and helpless that He is a captive to the Romans along with His people; (xii. 2) He does nothing to succour His own, so that He is either feeble or unjust[2]; (x. 5) the Christian God, who can neither be shown nor seen, makes careful investigation into everyone's character, actions, discourse, and even secret thoughts. He is always gadding about and always on the spot, made out to be a bore, restless, shamelessly curious, as He is by when everything is done, and a wanderer everywhere. But He cannot occupy Himself with anything in particular when He is solicitous about all things, neither can He suffice for the whole world when His attention is engaged with details; (xi. 6) you attribute to God all our actions just as others do to Fate, and so men do not favour your sect of themselves but because they have been chosen by God. You therefore imagine an unjust judge who punishes men for what they have been destined to do, and not for what they have committed of their own free-will. Celsus (viii. 69) says that surely the Christians do not expect the Romans to neglect their own gods and to worship the Most High so that He would fight for them. He did not help the Jews who served Him, for they are left without a single plot of ground or a home. Neither does He assist the Christians, because, if one of them commits an offence, even in secret, he is sought out and put to death; (viii. 12) referring to the

[1] Compare also i. 4.

[2] The gods of Rome, on the contrary, made her great, vi. 2. To this Octavius replies, xxv. (Halm xxiv.), that the Empire was founded and has flourished on butchery and robbery. God does not intervene in the sufferings of the Christians because He would test character, xxxvi. 9.

Christian worship of One God, Celsus says that despite this they adore the Servant of God; (vii. 34) the Christians expect to see God with bodily eyes, to hear Him with their ears and to touch Him sensibly with their hands. (Origen here corrects Celsus, who has been led away by a literal interpretation of scriptural figures of speech. As God cannot be confined to one place, sensual knowledge of Him is impossible); (vii. 36) the Christians worship the worst of idols, a dead man and a father like to him; (iv. 3) why did God descend from heaven? Was it to gain knowledge of men? But He is said to know everything. Then He does know, and yet He does not make men better and cannot do so; (iv. 6) according to the Christians God was unknown to men, and desired that He should be known, and to make trial of those who believed or disbelieved. In this He was very like an ambitious mortal displaying his newly acquired riches; (iii. 71) Origen quotes an opinion of Celsus, possibly derived from some unintelligent Christians, that God is overcome with pity for the sufferings of the wicked because of their wailings, but casts off the good who do not wail. This, says Celsus, is an injustice; (ii. 20) what God decrees must by all means come to pass, and consequently, according to the Christians, it was He who made His own disciples traitors and villains. (Origen shows that God's fore-knowledge of the treachery of Judas did not interfere with the traitor's free-will.)

8. The eternal order of the world, the Christian belief in its destruction by fire, and in the resurrection of the pious.

Caec. (xi. 1): Nor is this all. The Christians threaten the burning up of the whole earth and heaven too, along with the stars. They project the ruin, as if the eternal order of nature, established by divine laws, were to be disturbed, or as if the bond that unites all the elements were to be broken, the celestial structure to be dislocated, and that (endless) mass by which it is enclosed and surrounded, were to be undermined [1]; (xi. 5) to themselves, as being the good

[1] In xxxiv. 1–4 Octavius defends and expounds this doctrine, citing the Stoics and Epicurus and Plato in its support. Cf. 2 Peter iii. 7.

people, they promise a happy and perpetual life after death, while for the rest of mankind, as being to their mind the unjust, they predict never-ending punishment [1]; (xi. 7) is the resurrection with the same body or with a new one? (xii. 4) the flames which you foretell and dread at the same time; (v. 6) empty but terrifying conjectures; (v. 7) how can religious observance, or terror, be derived from this? Of what signification can religiosity be? (xi. 9) these fatuous consolations. Celsus (iii. 16): horrors. [Celsus (iv. 23) speaks contemptuously of the Christian doctrine of the Second Advent at which the wicked will be destroyed by fire.[2] Compare iv. 11, 79; Celsus (vii. 32) ridicules the idea of the Christian teaching about the resurrection, alleging that it has been derived from the doctrine of metempsychosis; (v. 14) he speaks of the folly of Christians supposing that God will burn up all the world except the Christians, and that the dead will rise clothed with the selfsame flesh as in life. It is debasing to wish for the soul to return to the corrupt body, and therefore the idea of this loathsome and impossible thing is not shared even by some Christians.[3]]

9. The worship of Christ.

Caec. (ix. 4): their cult consists of a man who suffered capital punishment for crime, and also of the deadly wood of the cross. Compare xxix. 2: a malefactor and his cross. [Celsus (ii. 31) blames the Christians because they pay divine honours to a criminal fixed to a cross. It was the stock argument. Compare Lucian, *Peregr.* xi.]

10. The bad character of the Christians.

Caec. (ix. 1) says that Christianity is enabled to extend so rapidly owing to the increasing corruption of the morals

[1] Also xi. 2 and xxxiv. 6. In the latter Octavius admits that the transmigration of souls theory put forth by Pythagoras was a corrupt form of the truth of survival after death. Compare Pseudo-Justin, *de Resurr.* x.

[2] Cf. 2 Thess. i. 7–10, in which the second advent with fire is described.

[3] Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 12. Some of the Corinthian Christians, even if they did not deny the resurrection of Christ, denied at least the resurrection of h e body to His followers.

of the time, and grows like a noxious weed; (ix. 4) the cross is a suitable altar for abandoned and crime-laden men (such as the Christians are); (xi. 5) the Christians are the unjust rather than others; (ix. 2) their vain and mad superstition glories in its crimes, the cult they practise is one of sensuality. [Celsus, as we have seen, has nothing about ritual murder of children or debauchery, but he gives generally no flattering picture of Christian society, and fixes on the point that sinners are welcomed rather than the innocent.]

11. The Christians withdraw themselves from public worship and public life.

Caec. (viii. 4): a people skulking in hiding places and shunning the light, dumb in the open but full of talk in corners. They scorn the temples as being equivalent to tombs, insult the gods, ridicule the sacred rites, despise offices and dignities; (x. 2) they make every effort to keep secret and to hide the object of their worship. They have no altars, temples, or statues, that are known of. They never speak out, they never meet freely. Why, unless it is that what they worship with so much mystery ought to be punished and branded with shame? (xii. 5) you (Christians) deprive yourselves of honest pleasures, you do not attend the shows, you do not help in the processions, the public banquets take place without you, the sacred games, the meats of which part has been sacrificed to the gods, the libations poured on the altars you abhor. Thus you fear the gods in whom you do not believe. Celsus (viii. 21) refers to the absence of the Christians from the public shows and (viii. 24) from the public banquets, and says (viii. 38) that although the Christians will not eat sacrificial meat lest they should eat with demons, yet they must eat with demons because from the latter all food comes.[1]

12. The folly of Christian martyrdom.

Caec. (viii. 5): what amazing folly, what incredible impudence! Tortures which they are suffering now they

[1] Unless actual verbal correspondences could be shown there is, of course, no reason why one author should be thought to depend on the other in a matter of such general complaint. Compare Tatian, *Or.* xxii.; Athenag. *Supplic.* xxxv.; Tert. *Apol.* xxxviii. xlii.

scorn, while those that are uncertain and belonging to some future time they dread. They are afraid of perishing after death, but in the meantime do not fear death itself! Their terror is, in fact, soothed by a deceitful hope, by the comforting thought of a life to come; (xii. 6) unhappy wretches, there is no resurrection for you, and meanwhile you do not enjoy life. Celsus (viii. 49) says that the Christians are inconsistent in attaching so much importance to the body as to expect it to rise again, and yet at the same time exposing it to tortures as if it were worthless[1]; (vii. 45) that the Christians are completely wedded to the flesh, that they look upon nothing that is pure, that they are absolutely crippled and mutilated in mind, leading a merely animal life, that of the body, which is the dead part of our nature.

Keim was under the impression that the above comparison was sufficient to prove that Minucius had Celsus before him, but to prove this more would be necessary. There is an approach to verbal coincidence between the 'vanae et formidolosae opiniones' (Min. v. 6) and 'deimata,' horrors (Celsus, iii. 16), in section 8 above. But many more have described the Christian eschatology in this way. Perhaps the 'inlicitae factionis' of Min. (viii. 3) is nearer the 'aporretou koinonias' of Celsus (viii. 17) in section 2. We subjoin, however, several more comparisons in addition to those made by Keim. Wilhelm (*op. cit.* p. 73) compares Min. x. 2 with Celsus i. 1 to show that the former does not necessarily follow the latter in any of the places enumerated by Keim. Caecilius asks 'Why do they make special efforts to conceal whatever is the object of their worship, since virtue rejoices in being open and crime is secret?' Origen, giving the substance of what Celsus has said, writes, 'The first point which Celsus brings forward, in his desire to throw discredit upon Christianity,

[1] Celsus here, however, approves of the doctrine of the souls of the blessed being eternally with God, and those of the unrighteous suffering everlasting punishment. There is no such approval in the speech of Caecilius. On the Christian scorn of temporal death see also Celsus ii. 45, and Lucian, *Peregr.* xiii. It was notorious.

is, that the Christians entered into secret associations with each other contrary to the law, saying that, of associations, some are public, and that these are in accordance with the laws; others again are secret, and maintained in violation of the laws.' Here are two passages which may be brought together under the heading of secrecy (compare section 11 above) but in each of them the question is about a different matter. Caecilius blames the Christians for hiding whatever it is they worship, but Celsus is referring to their holding meetings in secret. In the one it is the cult, in the other it is the club or society which is complained of as being of a secret character. Caecilius has the scandalous gossip in mind, but Celsus is thinking only from the legal side. We might produce very many such passages bearing a similar superficial resemblance, but none of such could show that one writer has depended on the other. Under section 11 above, Caecilius (x. 2) objects to the secrecy of the Christians in having no outward expressions of their cult such as religious buildings, altars of sacrifice, or statues of their God. Celsus (viii. 17) says that the Christians shrink from raising statues, altars, and temples as the agreed badge or distinctive mark of a secret and forbidden society. But all the heathen world talked in this way. Even in the time of Arnobius it was held to be particularly impious in the Christians to build no sacred edifices for worship, to have no divine images, no altars either in public or at home, to offer no sacrifices of animals, no incense, no fruits, not even to pour a libation of wine (*adversus Nationes*, *c.* A.D. 305). Caecilius says (x. 1) ' multa praetereo consulto,' and Celsus is very like him when he remarks (ii. 13) ' I have many things to say, but I purposely pass over them.' However, Caecilius gets the formula from Cicero (*de Imp. Pomp.* xxvi.). Finally, on the subject of the demons, Caecilius has no such doctrine, although he boasts about the benefits of auguries and of the worship of the gods as Celsus does.[1] Octavius the Christian says that the demons work the oracles (xxvi.), and that the demons are the heathen gods, in agreement with many passages of Celsus

[1] Cf. viii. 45, 63.

to this effect in books vii. and viii. The conception of spiritual beings of an exalted order, who performed God's will in the world, was common both to Christianity and to the new movement in heathenism of which Celsus is an early example. There was no need for either Minucius or Celsus to go to the other for general knowledge on the subject. A number of reasons may be urged against Minicius having made use of Celsus. 1. Minucius does not cite Celsus in support of the heathen polemic as he does Fronto. 2. Celsus scarcely mentions the atrocious crimes alleged against the Christians, but Minucius gives us the clearest account in any author, and has their refutation as a leading object of his book. 3. Minucius has practically nothing to say about the nature of Christ, while Celsus gives special attention to overthrowing His divinity. If Minucius were refuting Celsus, could he pass over such attacks on the Person of Christ as, for example, the slander popularised by the Jews that He was the son of a Roman soldier (Celsus i. 32)? We should certainly have expected the heathen Caecilius, if he stands for Celsus, to have said more than that Christ was only a man who was executed for his crimes. 4. Caecilius will not admit a Supreme God. Celsus, on the contrary, does admit the supremacy, and consequently a unity of design in the universe. The national gods are retained as subordinate deities (viii. 2, 70, etc.). Minucius might well have cited Celsus against Caecilius on this head. 5. It is a strong argument against the dependence of Minucius on Celsus that the former ignores the earnest and solemn call of the latter to the Christians to respect and serve the Empire, with which Celsus brings his work to a close, and which seems to have been in his mind from the first. Could Minucius have neglected to reply to this, if his object had been to refute Celsus?

As regards the classified comparisons of Keim, together with the others, we think that his case for the definite connexion between the *Octavius* and the *True Demonstration* needs stronger arguments. It is not probable that Minucius intended to answer Celsus. But the one writer may have been acquainted with the other. We know that Minucius

had read Fronto on the heathen side, and that Celsus was familiar with some Christian works, and perhaps with the apology of Aristides. Minucius may have perused Celsus, and *vice versa*, along with other controversial writers, but the schemes of the *Octavius* and *True Demonstration* are too diverse to allow of any but general or commonplace resemblances.

A suggestion has been made that the speech of Caecilius is the substance of the charges brought forward by one Crescens, a Cynic philosopher at Rome in the time of M. Aurelius, and that Minucius wished to refute this adversary who was the special enemy of Justin M.[1] In his second *Apology* (c. iii.) Justin describes Crescens as a boastful and extreme individual, of whom no good could be expected, since as a Cynic he knew no good but indifference. For the mere sake of gaining popularity Crescens had publicly branded the Christians as being atheists and impious. Justin had openly tackled this man and had discovered that he knew nothing. He says that he is quite ready to hold a debate with him in the presence of the Emperor. But he expects that Crescens will plot against him. Such a character as Crescens has little in common with Caecilius. Minucius has not cited this *bête noire* of Justin though he has called Fronto to witness, and while Celsus may be read in the pages of Origen there is nothing that has survived to show independently what Crescens actually did say. We may therefore dismiss the conjecture about Crescens.

Before passing on to the reply of the Christian Octavius there is, in the dialogue, a short interlude or transition occupying two chapters (xiv. xv.). Its object is, naturally, to give life to the piece. A long speech has been heard in silence and an interruption is welcome. A short conversation now ensues which enables the umpire to compliment the first speaker and to put in a caution. When Caecilius has finished, as there is not the usual audience present to applaud his declaration, he takes a plaudit for himself. He smiles triumphantly and challenges his opponent to try

[1] See P. B. Seiller, *De Sermone Minuciano*, Diss. Augsburg, 1893, p. 10.

to beat him. Minucius very properly rebukes the young man for his premature boasting, although at the same time he frankly praises the ' concinnitas sermonis ' and ' subtilis varietas ' of his discourse. But he reminds him that the discussion is being conducted with the object of ascertaining the truth, not of securing praise. Minucius then embarks upon a digression on argument in general (xiv. 4–7). People, he says, are easily persuaded by oratory, with the result that what appears true after hearing one speaker seems to be controverted when a more skilful orator has dealt with the question at issue. They then complain that nothing is certain, and decline to give a decided opinion, instead of judging for themselves. It is a grave mistake, however, to condemn all speeches. While duly admiring shrewd reasoning as such, we ought to learn to weigh all arguments point by point in order to discover the truth. This digression is taken from Plato's *Phaedo* (cc. xxxviii.–xl.), the speaker being Socrates. In reply Caecilius voices his disapproval of the introduction of a subject which must have the effect of diverting the attention from the present requirement that Octavius should refute, if he can, each point that has been advanced. Minucius rejoins that he had only spoken for the advantage of both sides, in order that judgment might be given on facts alone, quite regardless of eloquence. He indicates that the time has come for complete silence in order to hear the response of Octavius, who is all eager to begin.

CHAPTER III

The Reply of the Christian

Octavius dissects the reasoning of Caecilius with logical skill. The salient points of his speech are :

1. There is an open road to reach certitude about God, Creation, and Providence. Truth is not uncertain in itself because some men have no fixed conception of it. Inferior social condition and lack of education cannot deprive anyone from examining things divine, since reason is given to all without distinction. In fact, opulent circumstances are a hindrance rather than a help in the pursuit of wisdom. We require not the influential position of the disputant but naked verity (xvi. 5, 6). Granted that self-knowledge is important, yet man is unable to know himself rightly until he has made all the investigation he can into the nature of God and the Universe, with whom his existence is inextricably involved. The state of man, instead of being too humble for the contemplation of high things, is obviously adapted, in distinction from the lower animals, by the erect posture of his body, and by the gift of reason, for the vision of God and of heaven (xvii. 1, 2). Look then at the perfect balance of the ordered universe. Here is no fortuitous assembling of cohering parts. The vast whole of earth, sun, moon, and stars is the work of Divine Intelligence, and is regulated by the Supreme Mind (xvii. 3, 4). A wonderful perfection throughout the whole creation testifies to the foresight of an all-pervading Providence. Steady variation marks the course of the seasons of the year, each adapted to its own particular fruits ; spring and autumn bring relief from the extremes of winter and summer (xvii. 7, 8). Look at the fixed bounds of land and sea, the regular ebb and flow of the tides, the eternal springs of

water, and the rivers rolling on their constant way. The surface of the earth is arranged to comprise mountain, hill, and plain in due order. Beasts and birds are supplied with the means of self-preservation in a variety of ways suited to each (xvii. 9, 10). Man himself in the beauty of his form confesses his Maker; he is erect, his countenance is uplifted, his various senses are disposed with the deliberate order of a fortress (xvii. 11). Every member of the human body has its own proper end. Still more wonderful is a dissimilarity in the features of the face along with a general likeness (xviii. 1). Furthermore, the means whereby we are born into the world can only have been ordered by God (xviii. 2). The same perfection which we behold in the universe as a whole is extended also to its constituent parts. Britain has little heat from the sun, but lack in this respect is made up by the warmth of the surrounding sea. Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India possess great irrigating rivers. A well-ordered house betokens a master superior to it, and so by analogy does the world (xviii. 3, 4).

[Here follows a digression on the Unity of God.]

Providence having been proved, we now come to the inquiry whether this celestial government is exercised by one or many. Not by any divided authority, surely, as we may easily deduce from the disastrous consequences which this has produced in human affairs. 'When did ever the sharing of a kingdom begin with honesty or end without blood?' (xviii. 5, 6). The animal world furnishes instances of single leadership (xviii. 7). God is One since He is eternal, omnipotent, and has other perfections associated with unity, such as invisibility, incomprehensibility, infinity, and inestimability. He has no special name because there is no need to distinguish Him, and so the spontaneous prayer of man is addressed to the One Being whom he calls simply 'God' (xviii. 7–11). The poet Virgil speaks of Universal Mind which created and sustains the world, and calls this spirit 'God'[1] (xix. 1, 2). Philosophy from Thales to Plato expounds God as the One supreme First Cause in

[1] *Aen.* vi. 724–728; *Georg.* iv. 221–223; *Aen.* i. 743. This is the Stoic view respecting Deity.

a manner agreeable to the Christian doctrine (xix. 3–15; xx. 1). [End of first digression.]

2. To wish to abide in a false religion because it is founded upon ancient tradition is an obvious error. Want of certitude cannot be urged in defence of an attitude of this kind, for the Providential ruling of God has been demonstrated. The fascination of fable ought not to ensnare into accepting what is untrue (xx. 2). Besides, as regards religion, our forefathers have bequeathed to us nothing but their easy credulity in lies (xx. 3, 4).

[Here follows a digression on the human origin of the heathen gods.]

The gods were leading men of ancient times, who were deified by subsequent generations either from a misguided sentiment, or out of recognition of their signal services as citizens (xx. 5, 6). The philosophers Euhemerus, Prodicus, and Persaeus[1] give a complete account of this process (xxi. 1, 2). Alexander the Great in a letter to his mother relates that secret information to the same effect was given to him by a priest.[2] Historians, both Greek and Roman, like (Cornelius) Nepos, Cassius,[3] Thallus, and Diodorus (Siculus) trace the life-story of Saturn who is admittedly the progenitor of all the gods. His own son (Jupiter) drove him out of Crete, and Saturn taking refuge in Italy taught the natives the arts of civilisation. There can be no doubt that we have here the biography of a human being. In Crete the grave of Jupiter is shown to this day (xxi. 4–8).[4] If it be maintained that apotheosis was bestowed after death the answer is that humanity cannot be converted into divinity, which essentially must have neither beginning nor ending (xxi. 9, 10, 11). Again, if the gods were once born, then why not now? And if they are immortal, and can have children, there would soon have been left no room for more gods in heaven, or support for men on the earth (xxi. 12). The Egyptian mysteries of Isis and the

[1] Cf. Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* I. xlii. 118; I. xv. 38.

[2] The letter is spurious.

[3] Who this Cassius was is a subject of conjecture.

[4] The text is referred to in the order given by Waltzing for chapters xxi. to xxiv. Edition 1912.

Eleusinian of Ceres, the rites of Jupiter and Cybele are only the dramatic representation of tragic stories of human lives (xxiii. 1–4). Gods are represented and described in their various forms after such a human fashion as even to appear bizarre or disgusting. Some are fabled to have attained immortality by means of the qualifying penalty of death (xxiii. 5, 6, 7). Homer, Ovid, and Virgil have supplied poetical accounts of incidents in the careers of gods in which are exhibited the passions and vices of men and women, stories which unhappily form a regular part of the education of the young, and corrupt their minds (c. xxiv.).

[Third digression. The origin and vanity of idols.]

Idols were originally statues consecrated to the memory of departed worthies. Costliness of material and beauty of workmanship fired the imagination and led the ignorant into the folly of worshipping the images of the dead as gods. They do not stay to consider how such idol gods come into existence. The material may have once been put to sordid use and the craftsman may be of vile character, but the god that is to be must be content with the process of his nativity. However, he is no god until he is consecrated to be such by his devotees (xxii. 1–5). Dumb creatures are more discerning. Mice, birds, and spiders make such use of the images as they desire, and consequently those who venerate the gods have to protect them by constant cleansing operations (xxii. 6, 7). Examination of the puerile and depraved sacred rites connected with idol worship clinches the arguments for its emptiness. The madness of the excesses of the many cults is concealed only by the multitude of the mad who follow them (xxii. 8–10). [End of third digression.]

[Resumption of the course of the general argument under section 2 with respect to the foolishness of adhering to the ancestral religion of Rome.]

The Romans do not owe their 'imperium' to their 'superstitio.' Suppose that the Romans are indebted to the gods for their possessions, the reward must have been conferred by foreign divinities, or native gods, in particular,

or for a special devotion to religion in general. But the foreign gods can have done nothing for the Romans, seeing that they were powerless to defend their own people from conquest. As for the native gods of Rome, what are they but superstition, diseases, infirmities, and prostitution deified? These are no gods at all. Nor can it be said that the virgins and the priests of Rome have been remarkable for purity. In fact the temples are haunts of vice. Therefore we must seek for another reason for Roman greatness, and this is plain from its very foundation by Romulus. The 'imperium Romanum' is simply the consequence of 'audaciae praeda.' Again, in the second place, it can be shown that the gods favoured by Rome have no power to confer the dominion of the world, for there have been other great empires like those of Assyria, Media, Persia, Greece and Egypt which ruled quite independently of the Roman 'superstitio' (xxv.).

Auguries and oracles can give no support to the thesis of the utility of ancestral religion either. Observance of auguries has not always brought good fortune, or neglect of them produced disaster (xxvi. 1–4). Oracles have been of no help to the prophet himself, and the deliberate invention of them is well known. Out of the great mass of lies these divinations may have appeared to hit on the truth sometimes, but it was never anything else but coincidence (xxvi. 5–7).

[Fourth digression. On the existence and activities of the demons.]

Spirits fallen from heaven and alienated from God wander upon the earth. Poets called them 'demons' and Socrates attests their real existence by asserting that he had one of them as his constant attendant. Hostanes,[1] the chief of the Magi, tells us of good angels and evil spirits. Plato in his dialogue *Symposium*[2] attempts to define their nature. According to him it consists of a substance

[1] Hostanes wrote books on medical magic, and is the pioneer of that subject in literature. He accompanied Xerxes in his expedition against the Greeks.

[2] 202 E.

intermediate between the heavenly and the earthly, and partaking of the essence of both (xxvi. 8–12). The demons are hostile to man and are the very source of error and perverseness (xxvi. 7, 8). Their activities include the inculcation of depraved religions (xxvi. 8), the animation of images and temples, the inspiration of soothsayers, the manipulation of auguries and oracles, the disturbing of human lives, the disquieting of sleep, the introduction of disease, terror, and pain into men to compel worship of them, and, when sated with sacrifice, pretended cures, the demoniac possession of the Galli simulating prophetical inspiration but inciting to something else (self-mutilation), and the invention of miraculous stories. When exorcised in the name of the One True God the demons confess themselves, consequently they are afraid to continue their attack on Christian meetings. But they sow hatred in the hearts of the people in order to prevent them from learning the truth about the Christians (xxvii.). And it is they who spread the evil reports (xxviii. 5, 6).

[Fifth digression. The Christians in the Courts.]

When Christians are brought to trial they do not receive even bare justice. They are condemned on mere scandalous gossip instead of upon positive evidence. In fact, it is not thought proper to give them a fair hearing at all. Methods are adopted to support a judgment already passed. Torture is applied not to elicit the truth but to force out lies in prospect of release. If a Christian disavows his faith before the judge it is held to be quite sufficient atonement for his supposed crimes. We know exactly what is the procedure from our own practice in the law courts (xxviii, 1–5). [End of fifth and last digression.]

3. Defence of the Christians and their religion. The objections to the social life of the Christians, to their sacred rites, and to their doctrines are founded upon absolute lies of demoniac origin, upon sinister misinterpretation, and upon half-truths. It does not follow that their refusal of state offices and positions proves the Christians to belong only to the lowest classes. The adoption of a common principle of good does not constitute them into a dangerous

faction. When gathered together they are as quiet as when they are alone. If their opinions are only ventilated in out of the way places, it is because people will not listen to them in public. We are not of the rabble because we refuse state offices (xxxi. 6). Increase in numbers is no crime, but rather shows the Christians worthy of praise for the attractiveness of their good way of life (xxxi. 8). They do not mark themselves, as is alleged, with any secret sign (on the flesh) ; innocence and modesty are sufficient symbols to make them known to each other. There is nothing sinister about their mutual appellation as ' brethren.' The meaning of it is that they are all children of the One God, sharing the same faith, and inheriting the same hope (xxxi. 8). Our sacred rites are impugned. Most of the charges are vicious fictions : the rest are perversions. The folly of deifying the head of an ass should be sufficient refutation, but what of yourselves (the heathen) ? For you do not merely worship the head but the whole ass along with Epona (the goddess of the Stable). You eat cakes in the form of an ass as a sacrifice to Isis ; and venerate bull-headed (Apis), ram-headed (Hammon), dog-headed (Anubis) as well as the semi-goat deities Pan and the Satyrs. The many cults which make gods of reptiles, beasts and birds, and attach the death penalty to their killing, are left unmolested (xxviii. 7, 8). ' De adoratis sacerdotis virilibus,' such a slander could only originate from those who are steeped in licentiousness themselves, and addicted to an abysmal degradation which we should not have mentioned unless we had been compelled to do so. The Christians are pure and modest people (xxviii. 10–xxix. 1). You say that we worship a criminal and his cross, and you are wrong. No criminal, no mere mortal man could be accepted by us as a god. Sad would be that wretch's lot who rested all his hopes upon such a one [1] (xxix. 2, 3). The Egyptians, however, pay divine honours to a man of themselves (Anubis). Kings are called gods by disgraceful flatterers, and their genii, that is their demons, are the objects of supplication. The practice has gone so far that in law a perjurer who has

[1] Cf. Jer. xvii. 5 ; Ps. cxlvi. 3 ; 1 Cor. xv. 19.

sworn by the genius of Caesar has more to fear than if he had taken the oath by Jupiter (xxix. 4, 5). Crosses form no part of Christian worship, but the cross is a very natural sign seen, for instance, in military standards, trophies of war, the yards of a ship, the yoke of a plough, and above all when a man prays to God with outstretched hands (xxix. 6–8). Initiation into the Christian society is emphatically not by means of the ritual murder of an infant and the drinking of its blood. But you (the heathen) either expose unwanted children or strangle them. The practice of procuring abortion is common enough. Some of your gods require human sacrifices and others human blood.[1] The latter is considered to be a cure for epilepsy. Christians, however, are not allowed even to see the killings in the arena or the murders represented in the theatre. We are so far from the hateful rite of which we are accused that we abstain, on principle, from eating any animal food which contains the blood (xxx.). The demons have cooked up the monstrous tale about our banquets. What Fronto said on the subject was not evidence but the abusive declamation of a professional orator (xxx. 1, 2). We retort the charge upon you. Incest is legalised in some countries. The stories of the gods are full of it. Your indiscriminate sexuality makes it an everyday occurrence among you (xxxi. 1–4). But the Christians are most scrupulous about sexual relations. Their rule is one wife and absolute faithfulness. Some remain in perpetual virginity. At the Christian banquets there is excess neither in eating nor in drinking, and not only is the conduct decent but the conversation is pure (xxxi. 5). We are accused of hiding the objects of our worship because we have no images, no temples, and no altars. We admit that we do not use these things, and our reasons for not doing so will sufficiently show that we have not abandoned them in favour of clandestine rites. Man himself is the true image of God. The Creator of the world cannot be confined within the narrow limits of any edifice, but he can be much better hallowed in our

[1] The particular examples given are derived from Cicero's *de Rep.* iii. 15.

hearts. We require no altars for victims because the Christian offers what is the only acceptable sacrifice, that of a pure, just, and blameless life (xxxii. 1–3). Our doctrines concerning God, the end of the world, and the resurrection, which are assailed, are excellent in themselves and agreeable to right thinking. From the example of the conquered Jews you assert that the One God in whom we put our trust is too weak or too indifferent to help His people. If you will refer to the Jewish books [1] or to the works of Flavius Josephus or Antonius Julianus [2] on the Jews, it will be seen that while the Jews were obedient to God they enjoyed unbroken success, and not until they fell away from God were they deserted by Him, to their disastrous misfortune. Further, these consequences had been foretold (xxxiii. 2–5). That God cannot be seen or shown is another of your objections. God is indeed visible in creation and the physical forces which operate by His will. It is unreasonable to expect that the eye, which cannot see in the sun, should be able to perceive the source of all light, or to imagine that it could behold Him when it cannot detect the soul [3] (xxxii. 4–6). His Omniscience presents difficulty to you because you conceive Him as being located in Heaven. God is, in fact, everywhere at once. Take again the analogy of the sun which shines from the sky and yet its light spreads throughout the world without diminution of its own power. How much more is God, the Author of all, able to penetrate every thought! We live,[4] in this world-house of God, with Him, even in His bosom (xxxii. 7–xxxiii. 1). With reference to what we teach concerning the end of all things we submit that it is repugnant neither to natural law nor to the expressed opinions of the philosophers. Not to believe that there will be a world conflagration in consequence of sudden fire falling, or moisture failing, is a mistake of the

[1] This is the only direct reference to Holy Scripture.

[2] Some Latin writer had evidently compiled a history of the Jews not now extant. His identity is uncertain, but he may have been an orator in the time of Hadrian, or the Procurator of Judaea when Titus besieged Jerusalem.

[3] Cicero, *pro Milone*, 84.

[4] Acts xvii. 28.

vulgar.[1] The wise are fully aware that all things that are made will perish, that even the heavens themselves, and all that they contain, as they have had a beginning will also have an ending. If the waters of the springs and of the sea cease to nourish the sun, moon, and stars,[2] the whole world will become a bonfire. Such is the settled opinion of the Stoics, because, say they, should the moisture fail, the universe would be ignited. The Epicureans hold the same view about the final conflagration [3] of the elements. Plato speaks of catastrophes of flood and fire (*Timaeus*, 22 C) and says that although the universe was made eternal and indissoluble, yet its Creator, and He alone, can dissolve and end it (*Tim.* 32 C, 41 B. Compare Cicero's translation, 15 and 10). What, however, the philosophers know on this subject they have derived from the Prophets, and have reproduced it in a garbled form (xxxiv. 1–5). The same applies to the dogma of the resurrection which you imagine we are compelled to protect by what investigation shows to be manifest absurdities. You therefore, first of all, impugn our rejection of the funeral pyre as really arising from a fear of complete corporeal dissolution. We reply that there can be no apprehension on this score, because the body is part of the elements of the universe, and therefore always in the sight and guardianship of God. But, merely as a matter of preference, we adhere to the old and better custom of inhumation (xxxiv. 10). The punishment of the wicked in the after life is a corollary which causes a further offence in our teaching, because evildoers would rather be annihilated than rise again to meet the just consequences of their deeds. Doubt is further encouraged on this head by the infinite patience of God. But two considerations will show the inevitability of the penal torments of the next

[1] Reading with Waltzing xxxiv. 1, 'deficere umorem'; cf. xxxiv. 2, 'consumto umore.' W. follows the tentative emendation of Norden. Minucius is here indebted to Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* bk. II. c. xlvi. sect. 118.

[2] A line has probably slipped out of the MS. here which is supplied by Waltzing from Cicero *de Nat. Deor.* bk. III. c. xiv. sect. 37. Cf. also bk. II. c. xv. sect. 40; c. xxxiii. sect. 83.

[3] See Lucretius, v. 383 ff. Heaven, earth, sea, and ether will perish by fire. The older Epicurean view was that the atoms of the universe would be separated, to come together again in a rebirth.

world. Ignorance of God is a crime which rightly deserves the infliction of suffering, just as knowledge of Him merits reward. Then, again, your own savants and poets give warning of the burning river (Pyriphlegethon) and the Stygian bog with its fire several times encircling (the lower regions).[1] Their knowledge has been gained from the demons and from the utterances of the Prophets that these things have been prepared for the purpose of perpetual tortures (for the damned).[2] Jupiter himself is therefore represented as swearing his most solemn oath by the Styx, for he well knows and fears the punishment awaiting him and his votaries.[3] There is neither measure nor termination to these torments.[4] The fire has an intelligent knowledge of its function, for it burns without consuming, and yet ever feeds itself (xxxiv. 12–xxxv. 5). We are inconsistent, you say: we promise penalties to others and are more deserving of them ourselves. Take then our challenge of comparison, even though some of us fall short of our own standard.[5] Our attitude towards women is superior to yours, crime to you only becomes serious in the fear of judicial conviction, but we dread conscience alone. The prisons are congested with your people, but you will find no Christian there, unless he is accused on account of his religion, or is an apostate (xxxv. 5, 6). Again, our God is held by you to be unjust if men are to be punished hereafter for offences which the decrees of Fate render unavoidable. What you call Fate is God's Prescience. He knows what we shall do and settles our destiny accordingly. A man is not judged by his position which he cannot help, but by his character, for the mind is free (xxxvi. 1, 2).

The resurrection of the dead is credible. Pythagoras and Plato, the most illustrious of the wise, have handed down the doctrine of revival, although it appears in the

[1] The reference is to Plato, *Phaedo*, 112 D, 113 B; Homer, *Odyssey*, v. 185; x. 154; Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 313–439.

[2] 'cruciatibus aeternis praeparata,' xxxv. 1.

[3] Homer, *Il.* xiv. 271; *Od.* v. 185; Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 323.

[4] 'Nec tormentis aut modus ullus aut terminus,' xxxv. 3.

[5] 'quamvis in nonnullis disciplina nostra minor est,' xxxv. 5. The same admission is made by Tert. *Apol.* xlvi., which shows that it cannot be taken to mean that some Christians have not enjoyed the advantages of a good education.

distorted form of the theory of metempsychosis.[1] God who has made man from nothing can renew him from nothing. Nature itself is a pledge of our hope. What looks like destruction is only the prelude to a fresh outburst of life. (You demand the evidence of an accredited resurrection. Nature again shows you to be irrational.) Day must wait until the period of night is fulfilled. Spring comes not until winter is past. There is no need to be impatient. We must wait for the springtime of the body (xxxiv. 6–12). (The austerities and trials of the lives of Christians borne in confidence of a future and better life seem to you to be contradictory of that hope. You err because you are arguing from your own conception of good and evil which is not by any means ours.) Our poverty is no disgrace but our glory. We are rich in God. Frugality strengthens character and lightens the burden in the journey of life. Worldly wealth we despise so that our poverty is voluntary, and our dearest passion is to obtain innocence, patience, and goodness (xxxvi. 3–7). Infirmity and adversity are not punishments but conditions of warfare. Body and mind are strengthened by hard discipline as all brave men have found (xxxvi. 8). Threat of worse troubles to come leaves us unmoved. The Christian martyr is God's soldier, and a glorious conqueror (xxxvii. 1–6). We are not deserted by God because these dangers come upon us. Like gold in the fire so the Christian is tried in order that his character may be proved (xxxvi. 9). The prosperity of men who are ignorant of the True God is more apparent than real. Eminence means a greater fall. A throne has tempted some to courses ending in moral disaster. Happiness can only remain with those who know God ; otherwise it vanishes like a dream. Kings go in fear of their lives, rich men are bowed down under the cares of wealth. Honour and position in the sight of the world are empty if the mind is vile.[2] Pride of birth is merely praise of one's parents. All men are born equal and the only thing that distinguishes

[1] Plato, *Phaedo*, 81 E, 82 A ; *Rep.* 620 D ; *Tim.* 42 C.

[2] xxxvii. 10. Caecilius brings the charge that the Christians despise honours and dignities, viii. 4. In xxxi. 6 it is referred to but not answered, and here again there is only a hint. The real reason was the necessity of conforming with heathen customs.

one from another is the possession of virtue (xxxvii. 7–10). Pleasures such as watching public processions and shows are forbidden to us because of their connexion with your religion. The scenes of frenzy at the circus games and gladiatorial contests are disgusting. The stage is disgracefully effeminate and flagrantly immoral (xxxvii. 11). We are surely free to follow our own customs with regard to meat and drink. What has been offered to false gods we cannot use lest we should create a false impression of compliance with rites which we reject (xxxviii. 1). We love flowers as much as any of you do. We gather them, dispose them loosely, or hang them in garlands round our necks. Excuse us if we do not wear floral crowns on our heads: the sweet perfume of flowers is inhaled by the nose not by the pate.[1] Your practice of crowning the dead is indefensible on your own grounds. At our simple obsequies are no fading garlands, for we wait for an incorruptible crown from God (xxxviii. 2–4).[2] Our quietness, modesty, and confidence (which you misinterpret as a pitiable state of debility) spring from the deep joy of our trust in God and our future happiness (xxxviii. 4).

4. In conclusion, no one should refrain from the inquiry into religious questions. Wisdom in the mind is preferable to the external indications associated with culture. Truth is not beyond our reach, for the Christians have found it (xxxviii. 6). So neither the dictum of Socrates, nor the scepticism of the Academicians, nor the prevarications of Simonides make any impression upon us (xxxviii. 5). Verity with regard to God has arrived at maturity in our own epoch. Let us rejoice in our good fortune and preserve a well-balanced opinion.[3] May superstition be restrained,

[1] Tertullian, *Apol.* xlii. 6, expresses the same preference for free and loose arrangement of flowers, and indulges in the conventional Christian pleasantry about the location of the organ of smell.

[2] Nothing follows here in explanation of the refusal of Christians to scent their persons, and their restriction of perfumes to funerals, in answer to xii. 6.

[3] Inserting ' regula ' before ' recti ' of the MS. with Dombart. The sense would be ' avoiding the extremes of credulity and incredulity.' Without ' regula ' the meaning would be ' avoiding boastfulness ' as where Cyprian imitates this passage, *de Bono Pat.* 3.

impiety confounded, and true religion alone preserved (xxxviii. 7).

Such is the substance of the speech of Octavius. The epilogue follows (cc. xxxix. xl.). Minucius informs us that when the Christian advocate had finished, astonishment filled both his auditors. For some time they gaze at him in silence. Minucius himself is overwhelmed in admiration. The inexpressible, as it seemed, had been put into words. An amazing erudition had been shown. Philosophic arguments had been turned back upon the Pagans. An easy and pleasant way had been opened for the discovery of truth. At last Caecilius cries 'I congratulate Octavius with all my heart. I wait for no verdict. I even take the victory for myself because I have conquered my own error. On the essential questions I admit Providence, I yield to One God, I acknowledge the purity of a sect which I can now call my own. Certain complementary explanations are yet to be desired, but as the sun is now going down they can wait for the morrow.' And so Minucius is acceptably relieved from the necessity of pronouncing his judgment. In his own opinion Octavius was certainly inspired. Gaily the three friends return to Ostia after their long debate on the sea shore, each of them happy and satisfied with the result, a conversion.

The latter part of this epilogue (c. xl.) is, like so much of the *Octavius*, indebted to Cicero's *de Nat. Deor.*, at the close of which Balbus the Stoic says to Cotta the Academician: 'You have expressed yourself strongly against the doctrine of the Providence of the gods . . . but as it is growing late you will give me another day to answer you.' After this Cicero says 'we departed' ('discessimus,' so *Oct.* xl. 4). But there is no agreement or decision on the subject of the debate, Cicero himself, being an Academician, will only express a preference for the arguments of the Stoic as seeming to possess the greater probability.

Upon looking at the logical analysis given above it will be seen that the reply of Octavius, excluding the pendant of the conclusion, falls into three main divisions, in the first of which are laid down the chief principles of natural

religion, in the second the heathen religious system is attacked, and in the third comes the apology proper for Christianity. It may be useful, for the purpose of a rapid conspectus, to reduce the Christian case to the following heads. 1. No class has a monopoly of the truth. It is within the reach of all and should be sought by all. 2. By the gift of reason God is evident to man. 3. God's Providence is clearly apparent in the perfect order of the world and of man's constitution. 4. God is proved to be One by the analogy of nature, by the human conscience, and by the findings of philosophy. 5. The heathen gods were mere mortals. 6. The idols are material and useless. 7. The Roman state and its religion are of vile origin and have a shameful history. 8. The doctrines of the Christians are in complete accord with right reason, and their rites, customs, and morals are perfectly innocent.

Of the merits of this discourse the author himself has made his own estimate (c. xxxix). He thought that they were admirable for three reasons. A very skilful use had been made of literary authorities, philosophic knowledge had been employed to good effect, and the truth had been displayed in an easy and attractive manner. Most readers will support the last part of the encomium even if they do think that Octavius is dull when he is erudite, and not very profound when he is among the philosophers. From his slight excursion into the field of dogma one has sufficient to judge that Octavius was probably very far short of the calibre of, say, Justin Martyr as a theologian. But there can be no doubt of the elegant charm of a calm and cultured eloquence, and of the persuasiveness of a remarkable moderation, considering the acutely controversial character of the matters under discussion, combined with an unfailing courtesy towards his opponent. Where the abstruse nature of the subject demands the patient hearing of citations in support of monotheism (c. xix.) we must confess that no author could avoid an inherent dryness, but probably the first circle to which the *Octavius* was introduced regarded a display of erudition as essential, and, further, would not find tedious the long disquisition, odd to us, on the nature

and activities of the demons (xxvi. xxvii.). In attack, however, Octavius springs into life. His exposure of the heathen gods and their rites is full of nervous energy, vivid, picturesque, satirical, forceful (xx.–xxiv.). Especially when he lays bare the truth about the boasted piety of the Roman state do we see the counsel in true forensic form (xxv.). In his defence of Christian morals against the slanders Octavius cleverly retorts the accusations upon the adversary, and thus avoids revealing information about rites which Justin thought fit to supply in pleading the innocence of the Christians, but which Octavius prefers to withhold. Above all Octavius excels himself as the best sort of missionary for a despised religion. In the language of a highly cultivated gentleman he describes the Christian life with an eloquent fervour and unshakeable optimism, which was a greater instrument than all the arguments in the conversion of a bored and jaded society. In fact, Minucius is most right in the opinion that the truth had been displayed not only 'facilis' but 'favorabilis.' Psychological feeling attracts us in this speech rather than philosophical reasons. We like the tone of a man who is sure and is happy in his certainty. In sharp contrast with Caecilius who speaks as a man enslaved to the benumbing tyranny of indecision, Octavius conveys the irresistible impression of one whose life has been transfigured by a complete emancipation.

The reply as regards arrangement is, in general, clear and logical. Octavius refutes his adversary, for the most part, in order of the objections raised, and this close adherence has, in one sense, the disappointing effect to the modern reader of giving too negative a character to the apology, which consequently throws less light upon the beliefs of the primitive Church than might have been expected. The confusion which appears in chapters xxi.–xxiv. is not due to the author but to some copyist who, when he came to 'Iovis gentem'[1] (xxi. 3) at the bottom of a page, accidentally skipped the next beginning 'Saturnum enim' and ending 'furentium multitudo,' and copied the page following,

[1] The passage about Isis and Osiris which follows in the MS. is probably a gloss. It is transferred by Waltzing to xxii. 10.

beginning ' considera denique ' and ending ' sed requirentibus.' By the time he had finished the latter he discovered his mistake, but instead of removing it and beginning again, he saved himself the trouble by transcribing the omitted portion out of its order.[1] So careful is the traversing of the majority of the points raised in the first speech by that which follows, that it is evident that the *Octavius* is much more than a literary report of a debate. It is a conscious work of art. The appearance of five digressions—on the Unity of God, on the human origin of the heathen divinities, on the origin and vanity of idols, on the Demons, and on the Christians in the courts—does not seriously interrupt the sequence of the reply, but they suggest that Minucius had been over his manuscript more than once, and had thought some expansion desirable. From the exclusively literary point of view the speech of Octavius has been assailed with some severity. It has been said that it is really a composition of innumerable fragments without any appearance of connexion between them. Chapters xvi.–xxi. are described as mainly a Ciceronian cento, and the rest for the most part a summary of Tertullian's *Apology* which Minucius used as the antithesis of the oration of Fronto.[2] The indebtedness of Minucius to Cicero is, of course, obvious [3] to anyone, but with the exception of the string of citations in chapter xix. in support of the Unity of God, he has welded his sources together with an original skill that is next to originality itself. As for his dependence on Tertullian or *vice versa* we shall come to that later. Upon the side we take with regard to the priority question must depend whether we do, or do not give Minucius the credit for at least two original arguments peculiar to the *Octavius* and the *Apologeticus*. In retorting the charge of canni-

[1] Lindner in his second edit. of the *Oct.*, 1773, first indicated the true cause of the confusion in the text, but Halm was the first to give it in a restored order in 1867. See his Preface, pp. 18–21 ; also J. P. Waltzing, who gives reasons for a more complete rearrangement in *Musée Belge*, 1906, pp. 83–100, and adopts it in his 1912 edition.

[2] Sisto Colombo in *Didaskaleion*, 1924, art. pp. 79–121.

[3] Compare, for instance, *Oct.* xix. 4–14 with Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* i. 25–43.

balism on the heathen (xxx. 6) Minucius refers to the eating of wild beasts stained with human blood or fattened on human limbs and entrails from the arena, and Tertullian (*Apol.* ix. 56) makes use of the same argument, but adds that the wild beasts in question are boars and stags, and that the paunch of a bear although actually loaded with human entrails is eagerly sought for. Elsewhere (xxxv. 3) Minucius compares the fires of hell, which burn men's bodies without consuming them, with those of the volcanoes Aetna and Vesuvius which are inexhaustible, and with the flame of lightning which strikes the body but does not burn it up. Tertullian (*Apol.* xlviii. 86) says that the wicked are punished by everlasting fire which is like that of lightning or of mountains, not consuming what it burns. Otherwise it must be admitted that the arguments of Octavius are, in substance, those which, in various forms, are so frequently met with in the Greek Apologists, but as the Pagans represented by Caecilius had only said what they were ever wont to say, there was nothing fresh to refute, and refutation being the scheme of the author, the only novelty we could hope for would lie in the discovery of original arguments on points already well worked over in controversy. As to the form of the arguments in the brief of Octavius, it is generally good and more adapted to the taste of cultured readers than the brusquely personal arrangement of Tertullian. The proofs for Providence, which are equivalent to the teleiological argument for the existence of God from the evidences of design in the universe, are very well managed. On the Unity of God a hasty perusal might lead us to think that some profounder reasons should have been added to the demonstration by analogy and from moral consciousness, but surely the author was too wise to lose point by dragging his audience through the mazes of philosophic speculation. One of his best passages is his third argument [1] for the resurrection. 'Behold how all nature conspires for our comfort the prelude of the revival to come. The sun sets to rise again; the stars fade

[1] The first is that of the consensus of the sages, and the second that God can remake what He has made (xxxiv. 6, 9).

only to return; flowers die but again they spring to life; when shrubs have withered they are once more covered with leaves; seeds do not shoot forth until they have first decayed. So is it with the body of this life as with the trees in winter; they hide their vigour under an appearance of dryness. Why should you be impatient for it to revive and return again while still in the depth of winter? The body must await its springtime' (xxxiv. 11, 12). Analogy can say no more and no better.

Renan, who is characteristically more friendly to the opinions of Caecilius than to those of Octavius, considers that the latter makes a poor reply on such subjects as the idea of a world conflagration and the Christian objection to cremation, teaching which has ever been a difficulty for the Church. A number of points in the speech of Octavius which appear to be feeble are enumerated by Renan. They are: the affirmation that God created the world and can destroy it; that God made man and can resuscitate him; that the philosophers have taught the doctrine of the ekpurosis; that it was their own fault that the Jews were conquered, God not having abandoned them but they having deserted God; the subtle pretence that the cross is at the base of the Roman religion, the military standard being a cross, and the trophy hung upon a cross representing a crucified man; the puerile explanations that the oracles and auguries were worked by evil spirits.[1] The last two instances are of arguments that indeed carried weight in early Christian times and were good enough for their purpose. As for the rest we think it is with Renan a matter of temperament. There are, however, two important instances, not mentioned by Renan, in which Octavius has not made a satisfactory reply. Caecilius in xi. 5, 6, has a real difficulty about the Christian doctrine of Election. It seems to him that if God only bestows upon those whom He has called to join the Christian sect the blessings of a future life, while to the rest of men, thus deprived of all opportunity, He metes out eternal tortures, there is thus done to the greater part of mankind a great injustice. The

[1] Renan, *Marc Aurèle*, 1882, pp. 398, 399.

answer which implies that the choice is made not by caprice but according to the foreknowledge which God has of what each man will do (xxxvi. 2) does not account for the presumably hopeless position of those who could never actually or adequately, in the course of their lives, hear the Gospel. One has the impression that Octavius thought that all who were worthy in his generation would be admitted into the Christian fold. Again there can be nothing more regrettable than the way in which the answer is given to the charge of worshipping a crucified man (xxix. 2, 3). Octavius does not say that the Christians worship Christ, but only that it would be a mistake to think that a criminal had deserved to be or that a mortal could have been believed to be a god, and that it would be pitiable to rest all one's hopes upon a mortal man. An instructed Christian might understand the allusion to the divinity of Christ, but it is certain that the Pagan would at once infer that his direct challenge had been avoided, since general observations about deification had been substituted for the admission or denial that the Christians worshipped Christ crucified. Octavius is not even consistent if he means that men have not been accepted as gods, for this is his own thesis in explaining the origin of the heathen gods (c. xxi.), and even here (c. xxix.) in the next breath he mentions the deification of Anubis and of princes and kings. On the same subject a spurious letter is cited, that of Alexander to his mother (xxi. 3),[1] but as it is again used by Athenagoras (*Supplicatio* 28) and St. Augustine (*de Civ. Dei* viii. 5) we cannot blame Minucius, for its genuineness must have been undoubted in the early Church. Again, all the points raised by Caecilius are not taken up in the defence. Octavius leaves unanswered the objections of the heathen that the good are no more immune from natural perils than are the wicked, and that just rewards and punishments are so far from being the rule in this world that virtue appears to furnish no advantage over

[1] The story was that an Egyptian priest named Leo told Alexander that the gods were really deified men. Alexander communicated this information to his mother Olympias by letter. Alexander the Great was himself hailed in Egypt as the son of Jupiter Hammon.

vice (v. 9–12), unless, as regards the latter, there are allusions in xxxvii. 7 and xxxvi. 9. The charge of aloofness on the part of the Christians from service as citizens in offices of state (viii. 4) is not answered but only alluded to in xxxi. 6, and perhaps in the insinuation of xxxvii. 10 of the corrupt condition of the world of officialdom and rank. In that part of the reply following xxxviii. 4 there should have been an answer to the charge (xii. 6) that the Christians would not embellish their bodies with 'odores' and kept the use of 'unguenta' restricted to funerals. The persons who assembled at the heathen banquets crowned with flowers were doubtless well perfumed and their skins made soft and smooth with scented oils and ointments after the bath, and this association led the Christians to discontinue the use of perfumery as an aid to beauty. Eastern associations, perhaps, but especially reverence for the body that should rise again, would suggest a sort of embalmment of the dead. Again Minucius is silent when it comes to details of religious practice, in this case, of funeral rites. It is very curious that Tertullian (*Apol.* xlii.) says just the same as Min. xxxviii. 2 on the Christian use of flowers, and goes on to answer a heathen objection that the Christians did not offer incense in their worship. The heathen gods, he says, are fumigated with it, but the Christians use the spices (he does not say they burn them) for funerals with far greater lavishness and at far greater cost. There is nothing in Minucius about incense. Has Tertullian misunderstood him, or altered the meaning slightly and supplied the answer Minucius does not give?

But the most serious omission is a very surprising one, inasmuch as there was ready to hand an immediate and positive answer. Caecilius (xi. 8) brings his arguments against the resurrection to a climax in this way. 'Setting aside the story of the three hours' leave of absence from the underworld enjoyed by the dead Protesilaus, can you adduce a single instance, throughout the ages, of a real resurrection, that we might believe?' Here was the opening made wide for the entrance of the historic fact of the resurrection of Christ, the central point of the apostolic

Evangel. But the Christian Octavius ignores it. He will argue rather vaguely that God can raise the dead because He has originally given them their life, and in choice phrases epitomise the chief natural analogies, but the concrete instance which is required, and which he has, he will not mention. This cannot be accidental. As with the Person of Christ, so with His Resurrection. Minucius is designedly dumb.

The opinions of Octavius are, of course, those which Minucius put forth himself as a Christian apologist for the consideration of his readers. His special message is that reason demolishes the claims of heathenism and establishes the truth of Christianity. Is this method of any use with those who have already followed reason by itself as their guide, to find themselves at last in a morass of contradictions? Religion of its very nature must include the inexplicable. The soul cannot be satisfied with scientific propositions: it ardently desires the Infinite which is indefinable and therefore mysterious. Caecilius, who is representative of the class which Minucius wished to reach, if he had been a consistent sceptic could never have been induced to accept Christianity as a certainty by an appeal to reason without revelation. He might have admitted the probability of Deism but not that of a personal Providence. But Caecilius and the educated men of earnest character in his age were not true sceptics, however sceptical might be some of their habitual utterances. Caecilius has kissed his hand to Serapis before he launches forth into an attack on Providence, and, after he has been able to find no room for God, he rides out into the lists as the proud champion of the Roman faith, the truth of which he bases not upon reason but upon antiquity. It is clear, therefore, that in the heart of Caecilius there was a religious impulse which only had to be directed into the right channel, and this his Christian friend tried to do by a preliminary use of arguments founded upon rational considerations. We shall not be doing Minucius justice if we do not bear these special circumstances in mind when we appraise the value of his work as a Christian apologetic writing, but it will be

interesting to notice some of his arguments which, if pressed home, would prove to be dangerous pitfalls. Minucius (xx. 5 to xxi. 12) accepts with eagerness the perilous hypothesis of Euhemerus and others which was so popular in Greek literature, that all religious cults could be resolved into the deification of good kings, great leaders, and pioneers in civilisation. In this way utility and not worship was given out to be the real motive underlying all religion, which was never in its origin other than merely human. Religions were deliberate inventions, and there was nothing divine in them. If Euhemerus was right, Christ was at most a good man whose cult was one with others which might prove of benefit to his followers. Should the ancient apostle of anthropomorphism be followed in the cases of Jupiter, Apollo, Isis, and Ceres, why not also in that of Jahweh of Israel, the Unicus Deus of the Christians? But such a result was not perceived by the early Christian controversialists, and even the great Augustine can approve of the shallow rationalist Euhemerus (*de Civ. Dei* vi. 7). Having called the philosopher of Messina to his aid in order to overthrow the heathen gods, Minucius (xxi. 11) is perfectly sound in maintaining that the essential nature of divinity is that it should be without beginning and have no end, but, without the insertion of a saving clause, what Christian could assent to the proposition that ' a god cannot die, and he cannot be born, since birth implies death ' ? According to this the Incarnation of the Son of God and His death on the cross are things simply impossible. Minucius (xxi. 12) adds that if gods could have immortal children, neither heaven nor air nor earth could contain the divine population. He thus assumes that if divine procreation were ever possible, it must still be taking place. The heathen might have said ' Granted, for sake of argument ; then if there had ever been one Incarnation of the Son of God there would also have been many, and therefore there have been a multitude of Christs which increases with every age of the world.' The Christian would have to admit that a new Christ is not born for every generation, that the Incarnation was a unique event, an event that is true in

spite of its never having been repeated, but he would not have been able to argue against the heathen that no god was ever born because the birth of gods has not continued. Similarly on the subject of the heathen miracles (xx. 4) Minucius argues thus: 'Just look at those doting myths about the metamorphoses of men into birds and beasts, into trees and flowers! If such things had ever happened they would happen now, but since they cannot happen now, they have never happened.' It would have been sufficient for his purpose if Minucius had said of the wonder tales of Greek and Roman folk-lore that their lack of proportionate ends, their puerility, deprived them of being worthy of any serious consideration. There was, to the modern mind at least, no need to shatter the myths with such a destructive axiom as that 'what is not now, never has been.' Minucius, strangely enough, seems to be sublimely unconscious of what his dictum would mean if applied to the miracles of Christ. Again, is it safe to argue, as Minucius does, that the gods of the nations conquered by Rome were powerless because they had not protected their worshippers against the Roman arms? (xxv. 7).[1] The heathen uses precisely the same argument in the case of the vanquished Jews and their One God, and extends it to the Christians who suffer torture and death, yet there is no divine intervention. On the Divine Name, Minucius in xviii. 10, 11 is very firm, rejecting 'Pater,' 'Rex,' and 'Dominus' as unnecessary, misleading, and obscuring the splendour of God. Therefore 'Deus' suffices. But in xxxv. 4 he contradicts himself, saying that it is no less a crime to know not than to insult Him who is 'Parens omnium' and 'omnium Dominus.'

Minucius considers that the philosophers can be pressed into the service of the Church with great advantage in the pagan controversy. Within the space at his disposal he has made very large use of them, especially on the subject of the One Supreme God, giving a long résumé of their contributions (c. xix.). He is so pleased with the result

[1] Tertullian, *ad Nat.* ii. 17, uses this argument much more fully. Cf. *Apol.* xxv.

that (xx. 1) he dispenses with the idea of philosophy as a useful ally, and impulsively claims its identity with Christianity in this particular. Copying a phrase of Plato [1] he cries 'Either the Christians are the philosophers of to-day, or the philosophers were the Christians of bygone times.' No serious student of philosophy could have honestly entertained such a view, but as Minucius was satisfied, he was probably unaware how seriously the philosophers disagreed among themselves upon the nature of God, and how incompatible with Christianity their various speculations really were, unless we are to believe, with some critics, that Minucius conveniently ignored the facts. He is not alone, however, in claiming for Christianity the priority of possession of the fundamental truths which it shared with some of the best philosophical systems. Justin Martyr's theory was that Christ as Logos or Reason was always in the world, and consequently those who lived according to right reason were really Christians in spite of having been reputed as atheists, as, for instance, Socrates and Heraclitus. What right opinions the philosophers had on the nature of God they had derived from this source, although it was only a small portion of that truth which the Christians enjoyed in full.[2] Athenagoras also agrees that there is much in Christianity that is covered by philosophy, but Tertullian will not agree to this, although he has such a great love for Seneca, an admiration shared no less by Minucius. Again we find Eusebius (*Eccles. Hist.* i. 4) devoting a whole chapter in support of a similar thesis to that of Justin, that Christianity, in principle, is nothing new, since it was divinely established from the very first. The view is a favourite one, and in the case of Minucius we know what was the source of his conviction that the philosophers could be of such signal service to Christianity: it was Cicero's *de Natura Deorum* and *de Divinatione*. But after the enthusiasm of c. xx. 1 has had time to cool

[1] *de Rep.* 473, 'either the philosophers were kings in olden times, or the kings of the present are philosophers.'

[2] See Kaye, *Justin M.*, pp. 52, 53, his trans. of 1 *Apol.* 61 with note, pp. 56, 57, and his refs. to 2 *Apol.*; cf. Origen, *contra Celsum*, v. 57.

somewhat Minucius only grudgingly admits the contribution made by the philosophers to truth, saying (xxxiv. 5) that they have only imitated the writings of the prophets, and have transmitted the truth botched with falsehood. What Minucius probably meant exactly is explained by Tertullian (*Apol.* xlvii.) who says that the Scriptures were the source of all later wisdom, and all the poets and sophists were indebted to the prophets. 'Inde igitur philosophi sitim ingenii sui rigaverunt.' This is the reason why the Christians are likened to the philosophers. But what the philosophers found in the Scriptures they falsified or obscured to suit themselves. For instance, the simple and clear revelation of God in the Scriptures was clouded by philosophic discussions about His quality, nature and abode.[1] Minucius thought Plato a particularly valuable ally, but it is disputed whether he had a more intimate knowledge of Plato than had the early Christian apologists generally. He calls Plato's statement in the *Timaeus* (28 C, 29 A) about God 'heavenly' (xix. 14). He gladly adopts the exposition of the nature of the demons (xxvi. 12) which is found in the *Symposium* (195 E, 202 D E, 203 E), but which he could have got from Apuleius (*de Deo Socratis*, 6), and he is certainly tripping when he affirms of Plato that he had spoken of angels.[2] From the contemporary Christian stock-in-trade comes the ludicrous twisting of Plato from his doctrine of the eternal world into final catastrophe by the act of God (Min. xxxiv. 4; *Tim.* 22 C, 32 C, 37 D, 38 B, 41 B; compare Cicero's translation, *Tim.* 15). Lactantius is too wise to make the language of Plato so ductile, for on the creation of the world he definitely dismisses that philosopher: 'Plato, who discussed the creation of the world, could not know anything, so could explain nothing, for the simple reason that he was ignorant of the heavenly mystery learned only by the prophets from God Himself, with the result that he said the world was made for ever' (*Inst. Div.* vii.

[1] Again the idea is very common; cf. Justin, 1 *Apol.* lvi.; Pseudo-Justin, *Cohort. ad Graec.* xiv., *Theoph. ad Autol.* i. 14; Tatian, *Or. ad Graec.* 40; Clem. Alex. *Strom.* i. 16; Aug. *de Civ. Dei* viii. 11.

[2] Geffcken, *Zwei Griech. Apol.* p. 281 n. 5, thinks that this is definite proof that Min. had never read Plato.

1, 6). It is otherwise when Minucius comes to the subject of metempsychosis (xxxiv. 6), for here he calls special attention to Plato as the principal agent of the corrupted half-truth which had taken the place of the teaching of the prophets on the resurrection.[1] Socrates the master does not obtain in the pages of Minucius the respect given to his disciple, probably because he had been unfairly ranked as chief among the sceptics by both sides; and as being a good man unjustly compelled to drink the poison, he was claimed as an example in disproof of a divine government of the world (*Oct.* v. 12). Caecilius the pagan speaker recommends any Christian, who has sufficient ability, to imitate Socrates the Prince of Wisdom who, when interrogated upon heavenly things, replied that 'what is above us is of no concern to us,' thus by a confession of ignorance earning the encomium of the oracle that he was the wisest of men (xiii. 1, 2). Lactantius agrees with Minucius in putting a sceptical interpretation upon the saying of Socrates 'quod supra nos, nihil ad nos' (*Inst. Div.* III. ii. 10), but Tertullian (*ad Nat.* ii. 4) attributes it to Epicurus. The right meaning is found in Cicero (*Acad. post.* i. 15). Socrates found that his physical researches into the origin of the world were of no use to right living, and therefore turned to ethics and the study of man. On one subject only is the Christian speaker in the *Octavius* prepared to call in the assistance of Socrates, that of the demons, but here he claims too much, saying that the great philosopher always undertook or rejected matters in accordance with the approval and direction of his familiar spirit (xxvi. 9), whereas, in fact, the demon never told Socrates to do a thing, but confined himself to the function of indicating what not to do (Plato, *Apol.* xix.). Tertullian is more accurate, and he characteristically improves the occasion by remarking that the demon of Socrates was his dissuader from good[2] (*Apol.* xxii. 1). But angered by the suggestion

[1] *Phaedo* 81 E–82 A, *Tim.* 42 B, *Politeia* 620 D. Min. would know something of Plato's views on the subject as a matter of common information, and need not have read these passages.

[2] Min. xxxviii. 5 calls this demon 'fallacissimus.'

that a man should endeavour to imitate the wise scepticism of Socrates rather than adopt the teaching of the Christian faith, Minucius makes his spokesman burst out unexpectedly and inconsistently into an unrestrained abuse of Socrates and the philosophers (xxxviii. 5). He adopts the epithet of Zeno applied to Socrates, 'scurra Atticus,' 'the Athenian clown,' found in Cicero (*de Nat. Deor.* I. xxxiv. 93),[1] and then, in spite of the help he has previously accepted in proving his thesis for the Unity of God and in support of the Christian doctrine of the end of the world, being delighted with the result in the former case, and admitting that the philosophers had conveyed some truth in the latter, and although, in one sense, he thought the 'oratio' of Plato 'coelestis,' he launches forth into a wholesale denunciation of those very men whom he has claimed to be the Christians of a former age. The philosophers were debauchees and tyrants: they could inveigh against other people's vices so eloquently because they were describing their own: we scorn their pride. Perhaps he is thinking of a dictum of Seneca (fragment 18, quoted in Lact. *Inst. Div.* III. xv. 11) to the effect that most of the philosophers discoursed to their own condemnation and their curses turned upon themselves, but the idea was commonplace enough.[2] Tertullian, again more explicit, charges Socrates and Cato with teaching a community in wives, and says 'a fine example of Attic wisdom and Roman gravity, the philosopher and censor acting the part of pimps!' (*Apol.* xxxix.). Some critics are inclined to be severe upon Minucius for what seems to be a frivolous or even a dishonest method of argumentation, but in his defence it should be pointed out that the real enemy he was facing was a bastard scepticism, that Socrates was in some degree a rival of Christ, a venerable figure and a martyr to misrepresentation, and that it is the Academic philosophers whom he has most nearly in mind when he castigates the tribe for its vices. As a broad-minded man he would see the good and

[1] Lact. *Inst. Div.* III. xx. 15, calls Socrates 'homo scurra,' giving 'Zeno the Epicurean' as the author of the gibe.

[2] Juvenal, *Sat.* ii. 9, 20; Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, xiii. 8.

praise it, and be equally perceptive of the evil and condemn it, wherever he might find it, but in common with those who seek to find a *via media* he would be certain to incur blame for inconsistency here and there. At the back of his mind we can see an object, that of removing at least one formidable objection to Christianity, its novelty. Consequently he shows that it is in essence nothing new, by calling in evidence from the ancient authorities revered by the heathen world. But on second thoughts he is not unaware altogether of the danger of this alliance, and as soon as possible he is ready to assert his independence of it. He has appealed to reason, but knows that it must exclude dogma. Therefore, while he appeals to the philosophers at the beginning, he casts them out in the end. He praises them only in so far as they had professed natural religion, but as he knows they had never passed that point because they could not, he is compelled as a Christian, at the inevitable point of departure, to condemn them. We put these reasons forward as suggestions, any one or all of which might explain the strange treatment which Minucius metes out to the great thinkers of antiquity. Two early Christian writings are illustrative. Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, a convert from heathenism, whose only extant writing is the three books *ad Autolycum* (A.D. 181–182), considers that all there is of truth in the heathen writers was borrowed from Moses and the Prophets, and he contrasts the consistency of the Scriptures with the inconsistencies of the philosophers. He compares the Mosaic account of creation with the teaching of Plato (iii. 15–16), and other Greek writers who had approached the subject, like Aratus, he brands as corrupt borrowers. Like others, he is not correct in quoting Plato (iii. 6, 16). The way in which the early Christians treated heathen literature is shown very remarkably and fully in the Pseudo-Justin *Cohortatio ad Graecos* (A.D. 180–240). The Greek poets and philosophers are summarily thrown over (ii. 3), but on the subject of the One God the writer condescends to quote Homer, Sophocles, and Pythagoras. Plato, according to him, knew the truth, but concealed it with a deliberate ambiguity (xvii.–xx.,

xxiv.–xxvi.), he believed in the resurrection (xxvii.). Even Homer is indebted to Moses and the Prophets on such subjects as creation, paradise, and judgment to come (xxviii., and so on to xxxiii. ; see close of xxxiv.). The literary and controversial ethics of those days belong to an epoch when books were out of the reach of most, and an intelligent public was deprived of exact knowledge, of means of verification, and of the results of critical scholarship. Early Christian writers perforce shared some of the defects of the age in which they lived.

CHAPTER IV

Stoicism and the 'Octavius'

Minucius has been called 'the Christian Seneca' just as Lactantius enjoys the title of 'the Christian Cicero,' but in fact our author owes at least as much to the great orator and philosophic dilettante of the last days of the Republic as to the evangelistic Stoic of Nero's age. The Stoical character of much of the *Octavius* has often been remarked. Before proceeding to an examination of the most apposite passages, we shall find it useful to trace lightly some outstanding features of the progress of the doctrines of the Porch in Rome, from its introduction up to the reign of M. Aurelius. Panaetius of Rhodes, pupil of Diogenes the Babylonian (one of the three Athenian philosophers sent on an embassy to Rome, whose departure had been speeded by Cato the Elder) was the first to interest the upper classes in the speculations of Zeno and Chrysippus during the middle of the second century B.C. Roman Stoicism, a hundred years later, received, as the classical type of the 'good man' and hero of its worship, M. Cato, whose suicide after the battle of Thapsus was regarded in the light of a glorious sacrifice upon the sacred altar of liberty. What were the main tenets of the Stoic creed at that time may be gathered from the *de Natura Deorum* of Cicero, where the opinions expressed by Balbus, one of the speakers, are probably those which Cicero himself would have been inclined to favour, and almost certainly represent the teaching of the eminent Stoic philosopher Posidonius, under whom Cicero had studied. The influence of Posidonius was very far-reaching, and its effect was to soften and broaden the harsh and crabbed maxims of his predecessors. Not the

least striking was the impetus which he gave to Astrology in the Western world, holding that men could raise themselves to God through the contemplation of nature and especially of the heavenly bodies, because all things, including man, are manifestations of the divine, and there is consequently a perfect sympathy between what is in heaven and on earth.[1] To return to the *de Natura Deorum* which Minucius had made one of his masters, some of the views of Balbus would be very interesting to a Christian reader. The monism of the Stoic almost makes him monotheistic. He says (ii. 2, 4) that some 'numen praestantissimae mentis,' 'Will of Supreme Mind,' needs no proof of Its existence. We have only to look at the glorious heavens to be aware of It. And this 'Supreme Will' is Jupiter, 'praesens ac praepotens.' It is somewhat surprising to hear the pantheistic Stoic speaking of God as being no other than the Roman imperial deity of the Capitol, but in truth the idea of an abstract World Reason, when viewed as all-pervading Providence, easily passed into the apparent conception of a Supreme Person, especially as the Stoics were ready to allow something of divinity to all the state gods. But there always remained the fundamental identification of Mind with the Universe, of Reason with Matter, of God with the World, which rendered any seeming statements of the distinctness of them entirely nugatory. Nevertheless, the Christian controversialist would find such verbal admissions useful, and doubtless the 'numen praestantissimae mentis' of the Stoic was easily expounded as the 'Unicus Deus' of the Church. On Providence, the older view was that, as God is perfect, there must be a divine government of the world, or Providentia Dei. Such Providence was general, and man came under it not individually but merely as a part of the whole universe. The opinion of Balbus (*de N.D.* ii. 65, 66) represents a distinct departure from this. Providence, he teaches, is not only general but also extends to particular countries and to men, but, we gather,

[1] See for fuller account S. Angus, *The Mystery Religions and Christianity* (1925), pp. 48, 49, and a quotation from Posidonius in *Sext. Empir. Math.* vii. 93.

only to great men individually. The gods care for the great but ignore the small things (ii. 66, 167). Balbus is in entire agreement with Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus that the anthropomorphism of mythology has produced much superstition about the gods. On the other hand the myths have their value, for in them was enshrined a deeper meaning, despite much impious fable, so Cicero's Stoic thinks, instancing the story of the castration of Coelum by his son Saturn, which denoted that the exalted celestial fire needs the conjunction of no other, but produces all things by itself (ii. 24, 63), a curious example of the allegorising methods by which the later exponents of Stoicism endeavoured to establish contact with popular religion. A little further on the real mind of Balbus is more clearly revealed. From the productions of nature, says he, and from the useful discoveries of men, have sprung fictitious and imaginary gods producing again anile superstitions. The histories of the gods have been made quite human, hence these futile and paltry tales (ii. 28, 70). This does not mean that Balbus also rejects the gods with contempt, along with the poetic fables about them. The Stoic pantheism can find a place for the gods of the people, and provide a plausible explanation of them. His creed, he tells us, holds that God is diffused throughout the world, although He is known under different names, for example, as Ceres in earth, and as Neptune in the sea. These gods must be worshipped and adored under whatever name custom has given (ii. 28). The gods, however, possess no form, certainly not human form (ii. 17, 45). How, then, should the gods be worshipped? The best thing to do, replies Balbus, is to reverence them with a pure mind (ii. 28). One can see at a glance that even in the Stoicism of Cicero's time a veritable armoury of weapons of offence and defence existed, ready to the hand of any Christian writer who chose to use them in the next age.

It was natural that a period of rapid growth should await the philosophy of liberty, with the sublime figure of Cato for its inspiration, among the discontented aristocracy at Rome in the first century A.D. That loss of liberty was

beyond repair, but serious-minded men turned to an ideal of life which no tyrant could take away. They who would be perfect must always be prepared to make the sacrifices which the world demands, to misunderstanding, misrepresentation, and to the clash of principles, or to the conflict between principle and the want of it. The evils of Nero's reign were sure to bring Stoicism into greater prominence and consequent trial. The monster who occupied the throne was quite ready to listen to the insinuations of the wretch Tigellinus that the Stoics were puffed up with pride, restless and interfering (Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 57). But Nero did not attack their philosophy as such. His actions were ever dictated by caprice or personal animus. The Stoics who were his victims had made the fatal mistake of appearing to be too independent. Of three literary men of this school, two of them, Lucan and Seneca, were given the choice of the manner of their death by the Emperor, and perished by suicide. The other, Aulus Persius, who never enjoyed robust health, died in early manhood. His literary output consists only of a small book of six Satires which have been severely criticised, but in spite of their banalities, there is sufficient acuteness of observation and felicity of expression in his verses to place him in the third rank of Roman satirists.[1] Persius is a man with a message. Inconsistency lies at the root of the evils of society. Men imagine they can deceive the gods and worship them at the same time (ii. 4), the tyrant is himself the slave of terror (iii. 42), similarly those who think they have obtained liberty are slaves to vice and passion (v. 125), men pretend to be other than they are (iv. 23), and while they admit that wisdom must be sought, they put off the quest (v. 66). All this is at once convertible into Christian terms. The poet Lucan represents the destructive side of Stoicism. His *Pharsalia*, a poem on the civil conflict between Caesar and Pompey, is only a fragment, but there is enough of it to show that Stoic opinions of that time were not very coherent. Sometimes he speaks of an over-ruling Providence in some sort, but in its closer sense he denies it. 'It is untrue to

[1] See Merivale, *Hist. of the Romans*, vi. 294 f., on Persius.

allege,' he states in one place, 'that Jupiter rules . . . no god has any care for the affairs of mortals' (vii. 447, 454). Understood in the form of Necessity or Fate, Lucan readily accepts the Stoic Providence, but here again he is sceptical, doubting whether Apollo merely announced the decree of Destiny, or, in fact, himself brought it to pass by merely foretelling what he wished himself (v. 92). In truth, at the bottom, belief in the existence of the gods was a pose or perhaps a mere literary convention with Lucan, as with most of the Stoics. Of Seneca we shall speak presently. If the disciples of Zeno were stung, as were all decent Romans, into opposition to the throne by the excesses of Nero, they were not blameless of plots against a liberal sovereign, and Vespasian had to banish them, along with the Cynics, from the capital. In the reign of Domitian, one who has been reckoned the greatest of the Roman line, Epictetus, suffered exile from Rome, but with him begins the period during which the Porch was at the zenith of its power, especially through the years between the accession of Nerva and the close of the reign of M. Aurelius. From the maxims collected by Arrian in the *Encheiridion* and the *Discourses* a faithful picture of Stoic life and thought may be obtained, and Lecky (*History of European Morals*, i. 260) has brought together sayings of the sage which read like the solemn reminders of the conductor of a Christian retreat. 'The first thing to learn is that there is a God, that His knowledge pervades the whole universe, and that it extends not only to our acts but to thoughts and feelings.' 'To have God for our Maker and Father and Guardian, should not that emancipate us from all sadness and from all fear?' 'When you have shut your door and darkened your room, say not to yourself that you are alone. God is in your room and your attendant Genius likewise. Think not that they need the light to see what you do.' 'What can I, an old man and a cripple, do but praise God?' Sentiments of this kind were now expressed in an age when the highest might accept them, and a succeeding generation saw the Stoic on the throne in the person of the emperor M. Aurelius, the most illustrious disciple of the Porch, and, whatever may be

said of his statesmanship, a man of truly religious spirit and simple humility. His death and the accession of Commodus ushered in a new age in which Roman Stoicism fell into rapid decay, outworn, out of date, out of touch with the crying needs of men.

Now to return to Seneca, whose works were the constant companions of Minucius. As a Stoic, Seneca held a material and Pantheistic conception of God as the subtle fire or breath or aether, Itself an element of matter and permeating all matter, an intelligent force, the Soul, Mind, Reason of the World. By its action upon the inert element of matter this Force created the universe. Seen in the orderly arrangement of the world and its preservation, It is called Providence. Viewed as operating by unalterable law in an endless chain of cause upon cause, It is called Fate. But when Seneca discourses of God in the aspect of Providence, despite the denial of its particular action (*Nat. Qu.* ii. 46), he develops a theme of its benevolent, spiritual, and moral activity within the heart of man, which is near to the abandonment of God as mere material force, and to the substitution of a personal Being, the guide, support, and Father of His children. How, according to Seneca, should God be worshipped? The only worthy temple of God, he says, is the universe (*Benef.* VII. vii. 3). What pleasure can God have in the sacrifice of innocent beasts? If we would think of His greatness, it must be done with a pure mind and with a good and honest intention. Great piles of temple buildings are needless. The place to consecrate God is within each man's heart (Fr. 123 in the works of Seneca, suppl. vol. ed. by F. Haase, cited in Lact. *Inst. Div.* VI. xxv. 3). 'Light no lamps, for the gods do not need light, it is only for the worshippers' pleasure.' Frequenting temples fosters ambition. 'Deum colit, qui novit.' Ceremonial is superfluous. 'Carry no linen, or skin-scrapers or mirror for Juno: the gods need no such instruments. Deus . . . ubique et omnibus praesto est. . . . Primus est deorum cultus deos credere, and next to acknowledge their majesty and goodness. . . . Do you desire to sacrifice to the gods? Bonus esto. Satis illos coluit, quisquis imitatus est' (*Ep.* xcv. 47 f.).

There is no need to fear the gods, for they are benevolent beings. Expiations are only the consolation of a sick mind (*Nat. Qu.* II. xxxv. 1). No man can love God and fear Him at the same time (*Benef.* IV. xix. 1). The nature of the gods is such that they cannot do harm (*de Ira*, II. xxvii. 1). Seneca does not even see any use in prayer, since God is near us, with us, in us (*Ep.* xli. 1). From our point of view, if God is really impersonal and no more than diffused Reason, it is hard to see of what special concern we can be to Him or He to us, so that the question of His worship or of any reverence to subordinate deities does not arise. The above abstractions of Seneca on the subject were really destructive of any organised religion, and such a personal cult as he advocates could only survive for a time among a few intellectuals. However closely Seneca may approximate to the personality of the Divine, it will not save him from contradictions. He affirms the existence of God but yields to Him neither public honour, worship, nor prayer. The only recognition of Him is to rest in the individual consciousness of such as are capable of appreciating abstract impressions derived from a contemplation of nature. God indeed is rarefied into nothing that means anything at all to the mind or heart of man. When Seneca speaks of the gods as subordinate deities under the Supreme God, he describes them respectfully as 'numina' and objects of worship (Frs. 26, 16 in Lact. *Inst. Div.* I. v. 26, 27), but when he turns to the popular or municipal gods he cannot restrain his contempt for the wretched crowd. And yet he thinks the wise man should not dissociate himself entirely from their cult out of conformity to custom (Fr. 33, in Aug. *de Civ. Dei*, vi. 10; Fr. 39). Veneration of images, kneeling to them, praying to them, sacrificing to them, says Seneca (Fr. 120; Lact. *Inst. Div.* II. ii. 14) are acts the absurdity of which is shown by the fact that the worshippers of the images despise the craftsmen who made them. Nevertheless Seneca would have the wise man or Stoic conform to idolatry with the mental reservation of a philosophic mind. He is not, like the Christian, led by his conviction to break the law. The mythological store of the poets is

likewise dismissed as so much salacious rubbish with the instance of Jupiter's amorous weakness (Fr. 119; Lact. *Inst. Div.* I. xvi. 10). These fables are vicious poetical ineptitudes (*Vit. Beat.* xxvi. 6). Body and soul to the Stoic were really one, in the same way as God and the universe. The soul was matter diffused in the corporeal material, the active principle of the whole man, the source of his reason and emotions. Seneca appears at times on the side of orthodox monism, but one of his most attractive features is his acceptance of the platonic dualism, so that he frequently views the soul, in agreement with Cicero, as shut up in the prison-house of the body, and in unceasing conflict with it. Death not life would seem to be the greater boon, the end of strife, the attainment of light, eternal rest (*Ep.* cii. 26). To Seneca the destiny of man might be no less than equality with God reached through the victory over passions, but here the prospect was only held out to the 'sapientes.' He does not reject the controlling power of the stars over man's fate. The eternal Stoic cycle of ekpurosis and exugrosis was part of Seneca's creed. The present world would be resolved into primary fire in which all would be destroyed except God; pure Deity remaining after His body, the universe, had disappeared. Then all would begin again as before, a new world with exactly the same history down to the minutest particular. Seneca thoroughly believed in the great cataclysm (*Consol. ad Marciam*) and in a reproduction which, although everything evil had been consumed, would not provide a better human race (*Nat. Qu.* III. xxx. 8). To sum up the religious views of Seneca, his theology betrays a transition stage from pure Deism to a warmer Theism, and his confusions arise from an earnest desire to mould Stoicism to a form calculated to elevate his contemporaries from superstition, formalism, and hypocrisy to a purer intellectual faith and a simpler, truer life. His system, if it may be called such, was naturally inadequate, especially with respect to man himself. The great majority, according to him, were incapable of right reason. Even to the select few, the truly brave and the wise, the heroic strugglers with Fate, there was no help in Seneca's gospel

save that of reason, and no actual reward, since such would be but a bribe to virtue.[1]

The passionless, impersonal and impalpable Being whom the Stoics dignified with the august name of 'Deus' was indeed the unknown and unknowable. As He could neither be loved nor feared He could be of no interest to the average man, and might as well be left out of account in human life. His mechanical Providence was merely the cold working of a machine. If a man's life was wretched and insupportable, then he must lie down to be crushed under the burden laid upon him by a God who had so decreed by the inexorable law of Necessity or Fate. Yearnings for a future life were denied any real satisfaction. A few individuals, perfect in wisdom, might enjoy a continual existence after death in the heavenly regions which would be terminated in the great conflagration. Later Stoics like Plutarch were compelled to develop this limited immortality into a more attractive form. There was, of course, among the Stoics no conception of sin in a religious sense. Vice was merely the opposite of the Stoic virtues, and there were no degrees in it, which was a weak point in Stoic ethics. The only attractive side of the Stoic beliefs to the world in general was that which turned towards the stars which were thought to control man's destiny, of which a foreknowledge might be possible. Astrology became a popular cult which degenerated into the soul-destroying practice of magic. On the other hand the Porch did much in the cause of progress. Anthropomorphic ideas of the Deity were killed with a just ridicule. Instead of the almost incredibly vulgar conceptions, God was shown to be Pure Essence, and He was not separated from man but penetrated the human soul. Between man and man and race and race the only distinction was that between the wise and unwise. The slave or the broken might enjoy a real dignity in the possession and practice of wisdom. Stoicism thus conferred spiritual liberty upon all. The will could and should master the passions, a higher nature conquering

[1] See S. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Aurelius*, 1904, p. 294 ff., for an account of Seneca's teaching.

the lower. Duty was nobler than expediency, and the virtues were not mere human inventions but divine instincts from within. There was a life much happier as well as more exalted than that followed by those who devote themselves to worldly prosperity or the indulgence of the flesh. The Roman mind being naturally well disposed towards a philosophy that so fell in with the practical national virtues of simplicity, loyalty, and self-restraint, Stoicism was able to recall the nation to an earlier and better standard when social life might have sunk into hopeless depravity during the evil days of the tottering Republic and the first Caesars. The inculcation of a stern puritanical morality, and the creation of a class of loyal, clear-thinking, sincere men as sure of themselves as the most rigid Calvinist, purified and steadied the higher ranks of society, so that, during the era of Stoicism's greatest influence, the Empire enjoyed the benefit of a succession of good rulers. And, after the interval of so many centuries, the world has much more than an academic interest in the practical maxims of Seneca, Epictetus, and M. Aurelius.

But Stoicism did a far greater service to mankind than to save Roman society at a critical time, and to bequeath to posterity a fadeless literature. This was no less than to prepare the way for the Christian Gospel. Four fundamental principles maintained by the Porch were, with necessary modifications, basic ideas of Christianity—the Unity of God, the spiritual freedom of man, the open way to knowledge of truth for men of every degree, including the humblest, and of all races, and consequently the establishment of a universal brotherhood united in a common opportunity and a common faith. Important divergences existed in detail, such as on the nature of the Deity, the emotions of commiseration and charity, and the sanctity of human life, but these are small in comparison. On the subject of Free-Will it was necessary for Christianity to combat the Stoic determinism in the most decided manner. On the other hand the doctrine of Universal Law, the operation of the One divine Reason, agreed well with the Christian principle that God's Law for all men and every-

where is one and the same. Any resemblances or agreements did not, however, promote the slightest friendliness on the part of the Stoics towards the Christians. The Emperor M. Aurelius began in 166 the fiercest persecution which so far had befallen the Church, and in Gaul, North Africa, even in Rome itself, there were many executions, besides the numbers condemned to penal servitude in the Sardinian mines. Although popular clamour had branded the 'atheists,' as the Christians were called, with the guilty responsibility for the calamities of famine, flood, pestilence, and the incursion of Germanic tribes on the Danube, M. Aurelius was not the man to be swayed by vulgar agitation or superstition. Humane and just as he appears to have been, he could yet, precisely because he was a Stoic, have no mercy upon those whose obstinacy, from his point of view, was the absolute negation of right reason, the complete overthrow of all virtue. The Christian martyrdoms only increased his contempt. Surely suicide was the only way out for brave men who found themselves in an insupportable position. But the early Christians were, on their part, well disposed towards Stoical doctrine, in so far as it actually or apparently approximated Christian truth. The chief line of approach was through Seneca, the favourite of the educated middle class, who, though he never was a Christian, and probably never met or perhaps even knew of St. Paul, was, like that apostle, a preacher of righteousness, a zealous reformer, a spiritual doctor who felt that he possessed the only remedy for the ills of mankind. Remarkable but not extraordinary correspondences have been noticed between Seneca and Holy Scripture, especially with the Pauline Epistles, both in language[1] and in idea. A few were collected by Merivale out of a large number.[2] Seneca, in effect, writes: 'God dwells not in temples of wood or stone, nor wants the ministration of human hands' (*Ep.* xcv.; cited Lact. *Inst. Div.* vi.). 'God is worshipped not with (the blood of) bulls, but with a holy and upright will' (*Ep.* cxv.). 'God is near to all His creatures'

[1] Particularly in the Vulgate version.
[2] *Op. cit.* p. 291, vol. 6.

(*Ep.* xli. lxxiii). 'A holy spirit resides within us' (*Ep.* xli.). 'Men are truly God's offspring' (*de Provid.* i.). Men are 'members of the great Body,' that is we are all members of the one Body which is God or nature (*Ep.* xcv.). 'The first step in worshipping the gods is to believe in the gods,' that is, we cannot approach God until we believe in Him (*Ep.* xcv.). 'He sufficiently worships God who imitates Him' (*Ep.* xcv.). 'Who is there that professes entire innocence of the Law?' (*de Ira*, ii. 28), which is equivalent to St. Paul's argument in the Epistle to the Romans that all have sinned against the Law. 'Virtue embraces all, freedmen, slaves, kings' (*de Benef.* iii. 18), which recalls the oft-repeated apostolic maxim that God is no respecter of persons, and the Pauline universalism that all men have the same relation to God, that in Christ there is neither bond nor free. Like St. Paul, Seneca taught the goodness of God, and the impossibility of man being good without Him. All that He sends is good, even suffering, that by it character might be made strong.[1] Both teachers employ the word 'caro' in the sense of the 'flesh,' the lower nature, and describe the ceaseless struggle between these contrary principles in man (cf. Ep. to Romans, vii. 18–20).[2] Parallels of this kind, strengthened by the fact that both Seneca and St. Paul were victims of Nero's cruelty, made a deep impression on the minds of the early Christians, who were not at all averse to be considered philosophers also, and in the time of St. Jerome there was current a forgery which purported to be a correspondence between the Stoic Seneca and the Christian Paul.[3] The early Fathers were indeed so impressed with the phenomenon of Seneca's predisposition to conversion, unconscious though it was, that they were ready to accept him as a pioneer in the preparation of the pagan world for

[1] See Lightfoot, *Philippians, S. Paul and Seneca*, p. 279.

[2] 'Cum hac carne grave certamen est,' *Consol. ad Marciam*, 24. Seneca is also said to have used 'angelus' in the sense of 'angel.' On the other hand the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul have been thought to show traces of Stoical influence.

[3] Mentioned by St. Jerome and St. Augustine without expressing any opinion in favour of its genuineness.

the Gospel, and are fond of referring to him as 'Seneca noster.' [1]

Stoic like other Greek philosophy was early pressed into the service of the Church as a convenient medium through which to make, as far as it could prove useful, Christian doctrine more intelligible to the pagan mind. The way was opened by Philo's accommodation of Judaism to Hellenism, and on one point, the Logos, the Stoic distinction between Ratio and Sermo adopted by the Alexandrian Jew in his doctrine of the Logos Endiathetos or Immanent in the Divine Nature, and the Logos Proforikos or Proceeding in Creation, was equally attractive to early Christian theologians, themselves well trained in philosophy, and anxious to expound the faith in terms agreeable to men whose education had included, as a necessary subject, the main principles of Stoicism, Platonism, Epicureanism, and other chief schools.[2] But Irenaeus and others soon perceived the dangers of a speculation which might be used to show that there had been a development of the Logos, for though the Word as Sermo or Proforikos was an innocuous idea enough in connexion simply with the actual work of Creation, it was a very different matter when He was represented as Proforikos in the sense of Begotten at the moment of creation, according to Tertullian and Theophilus. The works of Justin Martyr show that he had assimilated much from the Stoics, in spite of his fondness for Plato along with a philosophical eclecticism. At the commencement of his *Dialogue with Trypho* the Jew we are informed that Justin's first instructor was a Stoic philosopher whom he abandoned because that teacher did not think it necessary to know God. Nevertheless Justin accepts the concept of the Stoic Seminal Word or Logos Spermatikos (1 *Apol.* xx. 60; 2 *Apol.* vii.). 'One article of our faith then is,' says he, 'that Christ is the First Begotten of God, and we have already proved Him to be the very Logos or Universal

[1] Jerome, *de Vir. Illustr.* xii.; Augustine, *de Civ. Dei*, vi. 10; Tertullian, *de Anima*, xx., 'Seneca saepe noster.'

[2] See Justin, 2 *Apol.* vi.; Tatian, *Orat.* v.; Tertullian, *adv. Prax.* v.–vii.; Athenagoras, *Embassy*, x.; Theophilus, *ad Autol.* ii. 10, 22.

Reason, of which mankind are all partakers.'[1] Again he writes (2 *Apol.* viii.) that Heraclitus, and amongst them of his own time Musonius,[2] and others of the Stoic school were hated and put to death 'since, so far as their moral teaching went, they were admirable, on account of the Seed of Reason (the Logos) implanted in every race of men.' The Christians enjoy the whole of the Diffused Reason or Logos of which these men had but a part. Elsewhere Justin breaks away from the Stoics on the subject of God, regarding them as atheists (*Dialogue with Trypho*, ii.). Nor can he admire Heraclitus, Musonius, and the Stoics generally on the question of ethics without one at least very grave objection. Suicide is not the best way out of trouble. The Christian is not at liberty thus to oppose the Will of God. If all men agreed with the Stoics there would be an end to the human race (2 *Apol.* iv.). Similarly Justin rejects Fatalism and maintains Free Will. Every man is so made as to be able to turn either to vice or to virtue of his own volition, which is what alone makes virtue to be what it is. Granted that good men like Socrates have had to suffer, and persons of the stamp of Sardanapalus and Epicurus have had the opposite fortune, what is the cause? It is the work of demons. The Stoics, being ignorant of this, have been misled into maintaining that everything is subject to the law of Necessity and Fate (2 *Apol.* vii.). But he accepts the teaching of the Stoics on the Ekpurosis, admitting that the Christians also believe that the world will be destroyed by fire, and asking why the latter only should be blamed for it? (1 *Apol.* xx.). He is not, in consequence, whole-hearted, however, in his support on this head, for he objects strongly to the opinion of the Stoics that God also will be resolved into fire (1 *Apol.* xxvii, Kaye's ed.) and states plainly that Christian doctrine here is not identical with that of the Stoics, who hold the degrading theory that all things will be changed into one another, including God Himself (2 *Apol.* vii. 8). Similarly Justin

[1] Kaye's trans., 1 *Apol.* lxi.

[2] Musonius Rufus of Etruria in the time of Vespasian; Tac. *Hist.* iii. 81.

condemns the Stoic Pantheism on the ground that it either makes God evil or denies the existence of evil. But apart from a sharp dissent on particular points, Justin is very far from being unfriendly to the Stoics, claiming that men who have lived according to Reason were, in so far, Christian: 'those who live by Reason,' he remarks, 'are in some sort Christians, notwithstanding they may pass with you for atheists. Such, among the Greeks, were Socrates and Heraclitus and the like . . . they who make Reason the rule of their actions are Christians' (1 *Apol.* lxi., Kaye's ed.).

After the foregoing it will not be surprising to find that Tertullian was profoundly impressed with Stoicism. He had been given a thorough-going heathen education, and as a professional student, would naturally lean towards the philosophical bent of the class to which he belonged. On the Logos, the Soul, and the conduct of life Tertullian shows evident marks of his pre-Christian Stoicism, only like other converts he preserves an absolute independence in what is accepted or rejected. He argues that the Logos which has come from so great a substance must also have corporeal substance; thus far with the Stoics, but he cannot, of course, agree with them that Logos is Deus, as Deus is understood by them, with neither person nor distinction of persons; and when, further, the Stoics would identify matter with God, the cleavage is decided (*adv. Hermog.* i.). On the other hand we have seen above that he adopts the distinction between Sermo and Ratio. It would seem also that he never rejected the Stoic fundamental doctrine of the corporeity of all things. Even the Soul is a corporeal substance, Tertullian not questioning the major premise of Zeno's syllogism to the effect that it is corporeal substance which by its departure causes death (*de Anima*, vii.). This bodily substance of the soul, thinks Tertullian with the Stoics, permeates the body of man exactly as the world soul is diffused throughout its parts, and he therefore holds that it has shape and the same shape as the body (*de Anima*, xxxii.). He is at one with the Stoics when they say that the senses of the body are inoperative in sleep, while the

soul remains active (*de Anima*, xliii.). The right way of life, taught the Porch, is to live agreeably to nature, and so says also Tertullian, for nature is the work of God (*de Cor. Mil.*). As regards mankind Tertullian, like the Stoics, views it as a great brotherhood in the fellowship of rational souls.[1]

Other early Christian writings as well as those quoted might be brought forward in relation to Stoic influences. One such shares with the *Octavius* a marked simplicity of its Christianity, coupled with a philosophical outlook. The *Apology and Acts of Apollonius* (martyr, A.D. 185) are so Stoical in tone that the defence of religion therein contained is just what we should imagine M. Aurelius to have made, had he been on his trial as a Christian.[2]

Coming to the philosophical bias of Minucius, if Elter[3] is right, the author himself preserves an allusion to his own views in the mocking words of Caecilius (xiv. 1) applied to Octavius, 'homo Plautinae prosapiae,' which Elter interprets literally to mean 'a man of the canine race,' that is, a Cynic. According to this, it becomes necessary to account for 'pistorum,' but the 'p' is removed on the score of alleged dittography, leaving 'istorum,' so that Elter would read 'What will Octavius, this Cynic, say, who, as the first among Cynics, is the last among philosophers?' The implication would then be either that Octavius had once been a Cynic or, in derision, a Stoic, or still more subtly, was addicted to a Cynical, that is, to the Christian sect. We think, however, with Norden, that all Caecilius has in mind is a mere proverbialism for 'lawyer.' General indications of opinion and, in particular, correspondences with Seneca's works, clearly show what had been, and what still was to some extent, the philosophical school to which Minucius was attached. The degree only to which the retention of Stoical ideas obtains in Minucius is really open to question. Thus R. Kühn (*Der Oct. des Min. Felix*, 1882) does not think that Minucius Felix is so near to definite

[1] See R. E. Roberts, *The Theology of Tertullian*, 1924, p. 66 ff.
[2] F. C. Conybeare, *The Apol. and Acts of Apoll.*, p. 29.
[3] A. Elter, *Prolegomena zu Min. Fel.*, Bonn, 1909, pt. 2.

Christianity as to heathen philosophy, while the Abbé Carlier (*Musée Belge*, I. 258–293) is certain that our author's attachment to philosophy was formal rather than real. An intermediate estimate agrees better with the dialogue as a whole, for, upon comparison with the *de Natura Deorum* of Cicero, it is seen that Stoicism in the persons of Balbus and Octavius plays the same part in both these works. This correspondence, along with numerous reminiscences of Seneca, shows that Minucius had formerly embraced Stoic philosophy.[1] Octavius does, from time to time, argue from a point of view distinctly Stoical. In this the author is, as we have seen, like Tertullian, and furthermore they both share the same hostility towards the Academics. Minucius, as a lawyer, and Tertullian, as one who had received a legal education, would find themselves members of a class which, under the early Empire, numbered many eminent members who were Stoics, not that the disciples of the Porch had any special fondness for the Bar, but because it happened that the opinions of Zeno, as propounded by his latest exponents, were fashionable among the educated people of that time. Nothing, then, appears surprising in the fact, at first sight remarkable, that in the *Octavius*, the polished work of a well-read professional man who had been converted to Christianity, the action consists in the opposition of philosophical opponents, of a heathen who, in the deeper parts of his argumentation, appears as an adherent of the school of the Sceptics Arcesilas and Carneades, that is, of the Middle Academy, and, in the reply, of a Christian wearing the cloak of a Stoic. When Caecilius, in his agnostic frame of mind, contemptuously dismisses the possibility of any certain knowledge of God and the evidence of a Divine government of the world, Octavius promptly opposes a philosophical argument, in which he first lays down the Stoic principle of knowledge, and then proceeds to discover God by means of the Stoic teleology. As Seneca himself might do, the Christian speaker expounds the doctrine of unity ; the universe is one vast organism, and God is the

[1] Ebert, *General List of the Literature of the Middle Ages in the West*, p. 37, in the French trans. 1883.

one omnipotent and omnipresent Power. The duty of man is to inquire into these august matters, and to live agreeably to the knowledge so obtained. Has Minucius then built up Christianity on a Stoical foundation, does he speak essentially as a Stoic philosopher, is his religion therefore mainly Stoical? It is easy enough to see little Christianity and much Stoicism, as Kühn and Bährens have done, by shutting our eyes when Minucius is essentially a Christian.

Granted that his theology and ethics would not, in selected passages, sound amiss in the mouth of a Stoic, we should not be justified in concluding that his faith only rises to a natural religion and morality, unless it could be shown that elsewhere he says nothing that a philosopher of that school would not be able to say. We ask, could a Stoic accept the One God in distinct Personality, or the Resurrection of the body, or the restriction of the circle of the truly 'sapientes' to the Christian society? If Minucius is still a Stoic, why does he not try to show that an accommodating way may be found whereby the Christian God can tolerate the existence of the heathen divinities, whereby Christians can sacrifice to the Genius of Caesar, and so take the legal oath in the courts, can, in fine, behave in exactly the same way as other Roman citizens, thus completely avoiding all conflict with the state? But we find that Minucius, beneath his Stoic cloak, is as irreconcilable as any. Moreover, as to his ethics, there are two points at least in which he is no Stoic. Minucius is, in the first place, positively humane. It is hardly the cold and harsh philosopher who shares so fully and frankly in a father's enthusiastic joys over the prattle of his children (ii. 1), who watches with the keenest interest and amusement the game of 'ducks and drakes' played by children on the sands (iii. 5, 6), and who glories in the amazing constancy of women in a tender phrase 'pueri et mulierculae nostrae' (xxxvii. 5). Epictetus could never withhold his scorn for women and children (ii. 4, 8; iii. 22, 27) and no Stoic could regard the softer sentiments as other than a contemptible weakness totally unworthy of the wise man. We next

come to what may be considered the touchstone, the question of Christian martyrdom. No author has spoken so enthusiastically in praise of the martyrs as Minucius. Whatever his wording on the subject, his attitude is diametrically opposite to that of the Stoic, to whom, as to M. Aurelius, the deaths of the Christians were the most extreme expression of unreasonable and criminal obstinacy, the very antithesis of the noble suicide of the ' bonus vir.'

With the foregoing proviso by way of a caution, we pass to some particulars in which Stoical or germane ideas and colouring are apparent in the *Octavius*. Controverting the ' omnia in rebus humanis dubia ' of Caecilius (v. 2) the Academic axiom of scepticism is opposed, in the reply of the Christian (xvi. 5), by the Stoic principle that ' sapientia ' is accessible to every man through the operation of ' ratio ' acting upon impressions received by means of ' sensus.' Octavius dogmatically asserts that Caecilius ' must know that all men, without distinction of age, sex, or rank, are born capable of reason and able to understand (' rationis et sensus capaces et habiles '), that they do not obtain wisdom by chance, but that it is implanted in them by nature (' natura insitos esse sapientiam '). Here is plain to see the Stoic principle of knowledge laid down without qualification. Men have natural gifts sufficient to reach the truth. By them, indeed, they can find God. Octavius apparently claims the highest powers for unaided reason in the preface to his teleological argument. Man, he says, cannot know himself until he knows God first, and is given ' sermo et ratio,' speech and reason, in order to recognise, feel, imitate God (xvii. 2). There is at this stage no hint of revealed knowledge. Are we to understand that Minucius is unconscious of a divine revelation ? If so, we must believe also that he is insincere when he maintains that the philosophers filched all they knew about the end of the world from ' the divine predictions of the prophets ' (xxxiv. 5). Minucius, in passing, accepts at least the prophetical part of the Old Testament, as a source of ' veritas,' as inspired by God, as a divine revelation. He can thus speak as correctly as a Christian as he can argue in the language

Stoic philosophy as a means of obtaining a hearing for the Christian religion. The substance of the argument is taken from the *de Nat. Deor.* I. x. 25 to I. xvi. 43, but with a very different result, for while the reasoning of the Epicurean Velleius leads him to the conclusion: 'Exposui fere non philosophorum iudicia, sed delirantium somnia' (I. xvi. 42), to wit, the absurdity of all other philosophical systems compared with that of Epicurus, on the other hand Minucius, by a surprising turn, triumphantly maintains: 'Exposui opiniones omnium ferme philosophorum, quibus inlustrior gloria est. Deum Unum multis licet designasse nominibus, ut quivis arbitretur, aut nunc Christianos philosophos esse aut philosophos fuisse iam tunc Christianos' (xx. 1), that is, he considers that all the philosophers of any account agreed with the Christians that there is One God. The sections *Oct.* xix. 10–13, on the teaching of the Stoics, follow Cicero *de Nat. Deor.* I. cc. xiv. xv. Minucius says: 'Even Zeno, Chrysippus, and Cleanthes themselves have several forms of their opinions, but all of them get back to the Unity of Providence. For Cleanthes at one time argues that Mind and the Spirit of Nature, at another time that the Aether, but generally that Reason is God. His master Zeno would have it that the beginning of all things is Natural Law which is also Divine, but sometimes Aether and sometimes Reason. The same (Zeno) by expounding Juno to be the air, Jupiter the sky, Neptune the sea, Vulcan as fire, and in a similar manner identifying the other gods of the people with natural elements, provides a forcible argument and refutes a common error. In much the same way Chrysippus believes that God is a Divine Energy endowed with Reason, that He is Nature and the World, or Necessity and Fate, and he follows Zeno in giving a physiological interpretation of the poems of Hesiod, Homer, and Orpheus. The system of exposition and discussion adopted by Diogenes the Babylonian is, that the birth of Jupiter and the origin of Minerva, and suchlike occurrences, are expressions descriptive of things (in nature) and not of gods. . . . Ariston the Stoic declares that God cannot be comprehended at all.' Ariston denied shape or sensation

to God. This shows, in the opinion of Minucius, that although Ariston despaired of understanding God, he was yet conscious of His majesty. Minucius does not quote Persaeus, the disciple of Zeno, from Cicero his authority, at this point, but he does later on (xxi. 2), to the effect that he identified the gods with the men who discovered useful fruits or with the fruits themselves. Obviously our author is no hide-bound Stoic, when he is so clearly conscious of the curious inconsistencies of the great men of the Porch when they ventured to define the Nature of God, of their bizarre attempts to establish contact with popular religion, and of their final failure to be able to say anything tangible at all. He leaves all his Stoic authorities in favour of Plato. But the natural theological language and even idea of Minucius is Stoical while acceptably Christian. Witness what he says about the universal presence of God in nature and in man (xxxii. 4–9): 'But, say you, we neither show to others, nor ourselves see, the God whom we worship. Granted, but if we believe in the existence of God it is because we can feel Him without seeing Him. In His works and in every movement of the world we behold His ever-present power, as when it thunders, lightens, when the thunderbolt falls, when the sky is fair. You need not think it odd that you do not see God. The winds and the gales drive, shake, disturb everything and yet are invisible to the sight. We cannot even look straight at the sun, the very source of vision. We are compelled to turn our eyes away from its rays; if we do gaze at it at all the view is obscured, if too long then we cannot see anything. This being so, could you endure the sight of the Creator of the sun Himself, the very Source of brightness, whose lightnings make you turn away your eyes, and from whose thunderbolts you hide yourself? Do you expect to see God with carnal eyes when that soul of yours, by which you are given life and receive the power of speech, you can neither discern nor grasp? But, say you again, God ignores human affairs. Being in the sky He cannot visit or know everybody. You are in error, my friend, you are deceived. How can God be a long way off, when all things in heaven and earth and

beyond the confines of this globe are full of Him? Not only is He everywhere near us but He is also infused within us.[1] Once more consider the sun. It is fixed in the sky but diffuses itself over every land; present in like manner in all places, it intermingles with everything, yet its brilliance is unchanged. How much more is God, the Author and the Scrutiniser of all, from whom nothing can be hid, present in the darkness, present in fact in our thoughts, which are, as it were, darkness too? Not only are our actions under His eye, but, I had almost said, we live with Him.'[2] All this is in reply to the Pagan objections in x. 5, and taking the whole passage from x. 3, where Caecilius commences his criticisms of the Christian 'Deus unicus, solitarius, destitutus,' there can be no doubt that the Pagan understands the Christian God to be none other than the national deity of the Jews, as distinctly personal as any of the heathen gods, and behaving in a personal manner. Moreover 'Deus unicus, solitarius, destitutus' could by no stretch of the imagination be applied to God as Universal Mind. If Minucius accepts the latter view of God, why does he not simply answer the heathen gibe by saying that the all-pervading 'Mens et Ratio et Spiritus' (xix. 2) cannot either be 'solitarius' or 'destitutus'? But on the contrary the Christian speaker expressly agrees with the heathen identification of the God of the Jews with the God of the Christians, and relates some of the religious history of the race which above all others regarded God as personal (xxxiii. 2–6). Finally Minucius leaves no loophole to question his orthodoxy, in these words: 'It is obvious that the Parent of all has neither beginning nor end, since He who is the Author of all existence must Himself be eternal, and before the world was, He was a world unto Himself. Whatever there is, He calls into being by His word, disposes by His wisdom, and achieves its consummation by His might.' Here is no mere active principle of matter, coeval and coexistent with the passive upon which it operates. The God of

[1] 'Ubique non tantum nobis proximus, sed infusus est.'

[2] 'Non tantum sub illo agimus, sed et cum illo, ut prope dixerim, vivimus.'

Minucius is distinct from and superior to His works. While the world has a beginning God is eternal.[1]

On the Ekpurosis, the 'Stoicis constans opinio' is accepted by Minucius in support of the Christian eschatology. For what he says, see above in the summary of *Oct.* xxxiv. 1, 2, in Chapter III. Minucius again follows Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.*, as his authority in several places for the great holocaust predicted by the Stoics. The end will come when moisture fails (II. xlvi. 118), because the heavenly bodies are dependent for their maintenance upon nourishment derived from exhalations from the waters of the earth (III. xiv. 37; cf. II. xxxiii. 83); for example the sun is nourished by the ocean (II. xv. 40). The theory was that the sun, moon, and stars consist of fire, and are kept in being by the vapours which rise from the land and water of the earth. After being refreshed in this way the heavens send the moisture down again. To this process the Stoics felt that there must be some end which would precipitate the final catastrophe. Such a view thus far affords a striking parallel to the apocalyptic element in the New Testament and Jewish literature, but where the Christian hoped for a new and perfect heaven and earth, after the flames had destroyed the old, the Stoic believed that all would be restored, exactly as before, in every detail and particular and tittle of history and event, no better and no worse, as part of an endless cycle of the same things.[2] The awful Doom had no terrors for the Stoic philosopher. For him there was neither judgment nor heaven nor hell. It was what should happen after the universal ruin that specially concerned the Christian who believed in one final end, with the eternal reward of the righteous and the everlasting punishment of the wicked. When Minucius tells us that this is part of his creed, as he does (xxxv. 1–4), it is clear

[1] Cf. xxxiv. 3, God, who made the world, Himself only can destroy it.

[2] There is not absolute agreement among the Stoics about the Ekpurosis and Exugrosis; some believed in a partial or total destruction by periodic floods. Zeno taught that all things would be resolved into Deity, into primary fire. Cleanthes thought that the universe would be set on fire by the sun, and that the prime cause would be the slackening of the creative tension.

that he is no longer in the Stoic fold. Furthermore, that distinctive tenet of the Christian, the hope of real, personal, conscious survival after death, so passionately held by the author of the *Octavius*, marks the extent to which he had departed from philosophy and embraced religion.

In connexion with Fate, as we have seen, even the Stoics were not consistent. The school of Seneca was ready to round off rough edges of opinion in order to produce a philosophy which would be acceptable as well as beneficial to mankind. Sometimes they speak in the manner of Minucius that not actions but only the consequences of them are foreordained, in this way admitting moral responsibility (xxxvi. 1, 2). What Minucius says reads at first sight like a Christian accommodation of the orthodox Stoic dogma. He will not have an arbitrary Destiny, but he does not deny Destiny. However, his strong assertion 'mens tamen libera est' is quite sufficient to save him from heresy, and in fact Minucius will, no more than Justin, subscribe to a crude Fatalism. A few other echoes of Stoic commonplaces support the conclusion that the Christian side in the *Octavius* uses language which, in spite of evident traces of a preliminary grounding in Stoic philosophy, is yet perfectly sound. Balbus says (*de Nat. Deor.* II. lxii. 154) that 'the world is the "communis domus aut urbs" of gods and men,' a common Stoic idea ascribed to Chrysippus. It occurs as the fourth argument in favour of Divine Providence; the world has been arranged for man's advantage. Not very appositely Minucius drags in the sentiment (xxxiii. 1) 'Deo una domus est mundus hic totus' as if the familiar catch-phrase had leaped to his mind. The sense must be that the Christians are not the only people who are under the care of God, and therefore it would be absurd for them to boast of their own comparatively small numbers. It would have been more natural to say that the Christians rejoiced that more men were being brought to the knowledge of the truth, in answer to the panic-stricken gesture of the heathen speaker about the disastrous spread of the Christian cult. But 'mundus totus domus Dei' has attracted the thought of Minucius, and he immediately goes on to speak

of God not needing informers concerning what goes on in the world, quite in Stoic strain, concluding with the 'sententia,' 'non solum in oculis eius, sed in sinu vivimus.'

A certain coldness towards the assumption of official duties in the State was characteristic of Roman Stoicism, which had been espoused by men of Republican sympathies. When Minucius left Africa for Rome he had already been able to join the Stoic sect, which undoubtedly flourished in Carthage, where Tertullian received his rhetorical and philosophical education. One outstanding teacher at least had propounded the philosophy of Zeno in Africa during the reign of Nero, and had left behind him books on rhetoric and philosophy. This was Cornutus, the beloved master of Persius. At Rome Minucius would find himself in the society of men who looked askance at the rapid growth of the power of the Emperor, even under the Antonines. He says (xxxvii. 7), as one might hear in such circles every day, that honours and positions of authority, even the throne itself, are a snare. Men are often raised higher to fall lower, and are like victims crowned for sacrifice. Seneca (*Ep.* xix. 6) advises Lucilius to abandon office for his own sake: 'subduc cervicem iugo tritam,' and he might be speaking when Minucius exclaims, in reply to the charge that the Christians despise office, 'Do you glory in a consulship and high rank? Vain is the error of man, and empty his worship of dignity, to shine in purple while he has a sordid heart' (xxxvii. 10). Tertullian, combating the charge that Christian partisanship is subversive of peace in the Empire, denies any political significance in the activities of the Christians, 'for we,' he writes, 'who are cold to all passion for glory or dignity, have no need for public meetings, nor are any matters more alien to us than those referring to the State' (*Apol.* xxxviii.). Again, he remarks that the Caesars would long ago have believed in Christ if Christians could have been Caesars (*Apol.* xxi.). The view of Tertullian is then that the Imperial government cannot be Christian. To such an idea of incompatibility between the world and the Church, the transition would be all the easier for a man who had been familiar with the counsels

of Stoics like Seneca, who felt that the impassivity of the wise man must be hard to attain when he is involved in the whirlpool of passions which surrounds those in public positions.

Indifference to worldly goods was pronounced by Ariston the Stoic to be the true end of philosophy. Wealth, thought the Stoics, is too frequently the worst hindrance to knowledge, and in any case is not required by any for the purpose of obtaining wisdom, since every man without distinction has the means within him, viz. Ratio and Sensus, a native-born genius, which is just what Minucius says in answer to the objection that the Christians are drawn from a class which is quite incapable of investigating profound matters (xvi. 5). Poverty sharpens the intellect; it is a term which cannot describe the condition of one who is content and who is valued highly by God. The true pauper is the rich man who can never be satisfied. At any rate we are all born poor enough. It is better to perform the journey of life under the lightest possible load. The Christian, therefore, despises wealth and desires only innocence, patience, and virtue (xxxvi. 3–7). The rich man finds Fortune a fickle jade. Life is too short to require much provision (xxxvii. 9). And finally Minucius sums all up as in a Stoical formula: 'Omnes tamen pari sorte nascimur, sola virtute distinguimur' (xxxvii. 10). Another heathen objection levelled by Caecilius against the credibility of the Christian religion was the physical sufferings of its adherents, either as the result of their extreme poverty or in consequence of persecution. The method of Minucius is well illustrated in the defence put forward by Octavius (xxxvi. 8 to xxxvii. 6): 'It is no chastisement that we suffer and endure the ills that flesh is heir to; it is our military service. Afflictions strengthen courage, and adversity is generally the school of valour. Moral and physical strength flag through lack of exercise. Look at your heroes whom you recommend as examples; they all flourished and gained renown through hardships. Therefore (it is erroneous to say that) God is either unable to assist us or disdains to do so, for He is the Ruler of all things and the Lover of His people. By means of adversity He strictly tests and examines each one, in

the balance of trials He weighs the character of one and all, even to the very last, to death itself. He continues inquiry into the will of man, confident that nothing can escape His observation. Thus, as gold by fire, so are we proved by hazards.

'What a grand sight it is for God to witness the Christian matched in the fight with pain, facing threats, punishments, tortures, with a smile,[1] spurning under foot (the terror of) the clashing weapons of death and the ghastly spectacle of the executioner, setting up his freedom in spite of kings and princes, to God his Master alone yielding, in defiance of the condemning judge as victor and conqueror exulting! For victor indeed is he who has won that for which he fought. What soldier is there who does not challenge danger more boldly when under the eyes of his general? Without trial none receives the prize. And yet the general cannot give what he has not got; he cannot make a man's life longer, he can only bestow upon him the honours of service. But not so with the soldier of God; he is not left forsaken in his pangs, nor is death with him the finish of life. Wretched may seem the Christian, but by no means is he so. You yourselves exalt unfortunate men to the sky, like Mucius Scaevola, who, when he had made a mistake in his attack on the king, would have perished in the midst of the foe had he not sacrificed his right hand. Yet how many of our (Christian) people have borne without a murmur the roasting and the cremation not merely of a right hand but of the whole body, even though they had it in their own power to obtain release! But why compare strong men with Mucius, Aquilius, or Regulus? Our children, our dainty womenkind make nothing of the crosses and tortures, the wild beasts and all the frightful array of penalties, inspired as they are (by God) with the power to endure suffering. And as for you, it is your misfortune that you cannot understand that no one could wish to suffer punishment unless he had a reason, or could bear up under torture without the help of God.'

Here Stoic and Christian have come to the same conception from independent starting-points. Man is made

[1] Reading 'inridens' for MS. 'inripiens.'

perfect through suffering. But the God each serves is not the same, for while the Vir Fortis can hope for no reward, save the attainment of virtue, the Miles Christianus receives from God the gift of eternal life. Minucius in his Christian days has not seen fit to abandon the Classics. His old admiration for Cicero has in no degree lessened, but above all he continues to love Seneca, and finds in the religious language of his favourite author and the Stoics of his early studies an agreeable vehicle for the expression of the new thought which is now his. For the literary composition of the *Octavius* the model chosen is the *de Natura Deorum* of Cicero, and in it he finds useful information and proofs. When, however, he approaches the more religious and spiritual side, Minucius turns with evident pleasure to other and more modern companions in his choice library, works written by the Stoic mystic of Nero's reign. From his master Seneca he has adopted the eclectic method, freely and independently accepting or rejecting in whole or in part, and moulding whatever philosophical material he can come at, as was the manner of the Cynics and the Stoics, so that, as we have seen, he can admit at one time the value of the work of the philosophers and at another brand them all as bullies and criminals. And so, Minucius turns even Seneca to account, though with reverence, and does not name his obligations to him any more than he does to Cicero, or Cicero to many Greek philosophers, or, indeed, any more than Seneca himself would do. For if this were a sin, then Seneca gloried in it. He borrowed and demanded liberty to do so, nay it almost seems that he was dangerously near to artfully disguising his sources. Witness his own advice that writers should imitate the bees. Literary matter should be widely gathered from one's reading to be used again. Into such a unity ought it to be moulded by one's mind that even if its source were apparent yet it should be different (*Ep.* lxxxiv. 5–9).[1] An early Christian author

[1] If Tertullian so plundered Min. Felix he would not offend the canons of good taste or honesty in literary composition, as then accepted. He was himself used by Cyprian, who regarded him as his 'master' yet does not cite him.

would not naturally cite the origin of his material unless for the special reason of obtaining added weight. Thus Minucius does acknowledge his indebtedness sometimes, and particularly cites the favourite passages from Plato, who was regarded by the early Christians as useful as a sort of 'malleus ethnicorum,' and here Minucius appears to have gone straight to the books of Plato instead of reading him through the translation of Cicero. Seneca, perhaps, at the precise moment when Minucius was writing, had not become part of the stock-in-trade of the Latin Christian apologist, but when Ebert first made comparisons between the two he was so impressed by the result that he concluded that Minucius Felix 'appears as a Seneca who has progressed to Christianity.'[1] A thorough exploration of the dependence of Minucius upon Seneca has been made by F. X. Burger.[2]

Not only has Minucius drawn from Seneca characteristic ways of putting things, but he has also taken from him a number of ideas. Of parallel passages which may be compared some are obviously related, and others are not by themselves conclusive. For the former we have a group of six passages. Min. (xxii. 9, 10; Halm, xxiv. 4, 5) on the Heathen Cults arraigns them for self-mutilation in the name of religion. He adds a reason why this barbarism is tolerated. It is because the votaries are so numerous; they therefore enjoy a mutual support. What really covers the general insanity is the fact that the multitude is mad: 'Quis non intelligat male sanos et vanae et perditae mentis in ista desipere et ipsam errantium turbam mutua sibi patrocinia praestare? Hic defensio communis furoris est furentium multitudo.' Seneca (quoted by St. Aug. *de Civ. Dei*, vi. 10) condemns the same practices in order to appease the gods. They are so unworthy 'ut nemo fuerit dubitaturus furere eos, si cum paucioribus furerent; nunc sanitatis patrocinium est insanientium turba.'[3] Minucius

[1] Ad. Ebert, *Tertullians Verhältniss zu Min. Fel.*, Leipzig, 1868. See p. 383 f.

[2] *Min. Fel. und Seneca*, München, 1904.

[3] From the lost *de Superstitione*. From the fragments preserved by St. Aug. this work of Seneca's has been thought to have been like that of Plutarch on the same subject.

is very contemptuous of the Egyptian Rites in which are dramatised the loss and discovery of Osiris and the mourning and rejoicing of Isis, a piece of mummery which ever recurs (xxiii. 1; Halm, xxii. 1). Lactantius (*Inst. Div.* i. 21) has a kindred passage which some have thought shows that the two authors went to some common source. So far as Min. is concerned his source was the *de Superstitione* or *contra Superstitiones* of Seneca, as is obvious from the remarkable verbal correspondences in a passage quoted by St. Aug. *de Civ. Dei*, vi. 10. Min. says: 'Isis perditum filium . . . luget . . . et Isiaci dolorem imitantur, mox invento parvulo gaudet Isis, . . . nec desinunt annis omnibus vel perdere quod inveniunt vel invenire quod perdunt. Nonne ridiculum est. . . ? Haec tamen Aegyptia quondam nunc et sacra Romana sunt.' St. Augustine reports Seneca as follows: 'Iam illa quae in ipso Capitolio fieri solere Seneca commemorat . . . nam quum in Sacris Aegyptiis Osirim lugere perditum, mox autem inventum magno esse gaudio derisisset, quum perditio eius inventioque fingatur, dolor tamen atque laetitia ab iis qui nihil perdiderunt nihilque invenerunt veraciter exprimatur.' Of the Vernacular or Indigenous Gods of the Romans, invented by Romulus, Titus, Tatius, and Tullus Hostilius, exactly the same list is given by Min. (xxv. 7, 8) and with the same object as by Seneca *de Sup.* (Fragm. 33 in St. Aug. *de Civ. Dei*, vi. 10; cf. iv. 23). Speaking of the spiritual worship of God, Min. (xxxii. 1–3) delivers himself thus: 'Templum quod Ei extruam cum totus hic mundus Eius opere fabricatus Eum capere non possit? Et cum homo latius maneam, intra unam aediculam vim tantae maiestatis includam? Nonne melius in nostro dedicandus est mente? in nostro immo consecrandus est pectore? Hostias et victimas Deo offeram, quas in usum mei protulit, ut reiiciam Ei suum munus? Ingratum est, cum sit litabilis hostia bonus animus et pura mens et sincera sententia. Igitur qui innocentiam colit, Deo supplicat; qui iustitiam, Deo libat. . . .'[1] Here is an illustration of the way in which an early Christian author

[1] Apollonius in his *Apology* speaks in much the same way as Min. does here.

used his literary material. He assimilates what appeals to him and adds expansions and glosses of his own, with, perhaps, a new ecclesiastical word for the first time like 'litabilis' (acceptable) thrown in. Lactantius (*Inst. Div.* VI. xxv. 3) supplies the comparative fragment (123): 'Quanto melius Seneca, et verius? Vultisne vos, inquit, Deum cogitare magnum, et placidum, et maiestate leni verendum amicum et semper in proximo; non immolationibus et sanguine multo colendum: quae enim ex trucidatione immerentium voluptas est? Sed mente pura, bono honestoque proposito? Non templa Illi congestis in altitudinem saxis extruenda sunt [1]: in suo cuique consecrandus est pectore.' [2] The famous passage on the Christian Martyrs (Min. xxxvii. 1) has been translated above. Its action was copied, with the necessary modifications, from the well-known panegyric by Seneca upon the spectacle of the good man struggling nobly against adversity. The adaptation by Minucius has been described as the most singular example of his literary dexterity.[3] Seneca (Dialogue *de Providentia*, ii. 9) endeavours to show that no real evil can happen to the 'bonus vir.' He says: '"Ecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat Deus," aye, and worthy of God too, the "vir fortis cum fortuna mala compositus," just as if he had himself invited it. If Jupiter has a mind to look at it, what more splendid sight is there on earth than that of Cato . . . says Cato (ii. 10) . . . (this sword) "libertatem, quam patriae non potuit, Catoni dabit." . . . It is clear to me (ii. 11) that the gods beheld that man with joy when he plunged the steel into his sacred breast. Death (ii. 12) comes not to so great a soul with strife but even sought.' [4] Compare the opening words of Minucius on the Christian martyr: 'Quam pulchrum spectaculum Deo, cum Christianus . . . adversum minas et supplicia et tormenta componitur.' But whereas in Seneca the brave man matches

[1] Zeno said of temples that they could not be sacred since they were erected by men.

[2] Compare Sen. *Ep.* xcv. 47.

[3] L. Massebieau, *Revue de l'hist. des religions*, tom. 15, 1887, p. 325.

[4] Read the whole of sections 7–12 of Dialogue 1, *On Providence*, c. 2, for the rhetoric and pathos imitated by Minucius.

himself with adversity 'utique si et provocavit,' Minucius asks (xxxvii. 2): 'Quis non miles sub oculis imperatoris audacius periculum provocet?' And as Cato preserved his liberty by destroying himself lest he should fall into the hands of men who seemed to aim at imperial power, so the Christian 'libertatem suam adversus reges et principes erigit' (xxxvii. 1).[1] Finally, on the same subject, Minucius says (xxxvii. 3) 'Sic Christianus miser videri potest, non potest inveniri.' He has recollected something that struck him when reading the next chapter of the *de Providentia*. Seneca, considering the 'aspera' or hard things, promises 'Persuadebo deinde tibi ne unquam boni viri miserearis; potest enim miser dici, non potest esse' (iii. 1).

So much for the indubitable proofs. Supporting them are a number of correspondences, partly verbal, but mostly in thought. Both Min. (xxi. 11) and Seneca (*de Sup.* Frag. 119 in Lact. *Inst. Div.* I. xvi. 10) mention the senile decay of Jupiter in connexion with the human generation of the gods. The Epistles of Seneca furnish parallels such as 'God is near you, with you, within you' (xli. 1), Min. (xxxii. 7) '(God) is not only everywhere near us but infused within us'; Sen. (*Ep.* lxxxiii. 1) 'Nothing is closed to God. He is present in our souls and comes into the midst of our thoughts,' Min. (xxxii. 9) 'From Whom nothing can be hid . . . Who is present in our thoughts'; Sen. (*Ep.* xcv. 47) 'God seeks not assistants,' Min. (xxxiii. 1) 'God has no use for informers'; Sen. (*Ep. to Lucilius*, v. 1) 'This I advise you, not to let your behaviour or manner of life be anything out of the way. Avoid the cultivation of severity, an unshorn head, and a somewhat neglected beard'; Min. (xxxviii. 6) 'We display our wisdom not by the fashion of our dress but in the mind.' The heathen in the *Octavius*, arguing on the futility of preferring one mode of burial to another, says (xi. 4): 'nec intersit, utrum ferae diripiant an maria consumant an humus contegat an flamma subducat, cum cadaveribus omnis sepultura, si sentiunt, poena sit, si non sentiunt, ipsa conficiendi celeritate medicina,'

[1] Min. xxxvii. 5 cites famous sufferers such as Mucius Scaevola, Aquilius, and Regulus, whom Seneca, *de Prov.* iii. 4, mentions, with others.

which seems to be founded on reminiscences of Seneca: 'Si nihil sentio, non pertinet ad me iactura corporis insepulti; si sentio, omnis sepultura tormentum est' (*de Remed. fort.* v. 1–2), and 'ignis illud exurat, an terra contegat, an ferae distrahant . . .' (*Ep.* xcii. 34). The section on poverty and suffering (Min. xxxvi. 4–9) is a cento of recollections.[1] Minucius says: 'The really poor man is he who has plenty and wants more . . . none can be so poor as when he was born. . . . Birds live though no patrimony is theirs, and cattle are fed from day to day . . . we possess all these things provided we covet them not . . . happier is he on the journey of life who lightens himself with poverty so that he groans not under the burden of riches. . . . It is no punishment for us to feel our bodily human frailty and to bear with it, it is "militia," warfare . . . calamity is often the school of virtue; and, in fine, the mental and bodily powers become torpid through lack of work and exercise. . . . By means of adversity He strictly examines and tests each one, in the balance of trials He weighs the character of one and all. . . . Thus as gold by fire so are we proved by hazards.' Seneca writes passim: 'It is not he who has little but he who covets more who is poor' (*Ep.* ii. 6); 'there is no one living so poor as when he was born' (*de Prov.* vi. 6); 'the birds lack nothing, the cattle live from day to day' (*de Rem. fort.* x. 1); 'surely he has everything who covets nothing' (*Ep.* cxix. 2); 'Democritus rejected riches, since he considered them a burden to the good mind' (*de Prov.* vi. 2); 'fortune scourges and wounds us: we endure it: it is not cruelty, it is a conflict' ('certamen,' *de Prov.* iv. 12); 'calamity is the occasion of virtue' (*de Prov.* iv. 6); 'the good man considers all adversity an exercise' (*de Prov.* i. 2); 'virtue withers without adversity' (*de Prov.* i. 4); 'whom He approves and loves, them therefore God steels, whom He recognises He exercises' (*de Prov.* iv. 7); 'fire proves gold, misery proves brave men' (*de Prov.* v. 9).

[1] It is here repeated more literally than above and with only the compared phrases.

The above shows that Minucius was so enamoured of the expressions of Seneca that these influence his diction even when the underlying idea is not identical, as it frequently could not be. In style the general background in Minucius is the periodic phrase of Cicero, but upon this he works the incisive 'sententiae,' the breaking up into short and often paradoxical sentences, so characteristic of Seneca. It is just to say, however, that there was no absolute need for Minucius to go to Seneca for the modern style which the latter brought to occupy a position of literary honour. The style was current at the time, and the same applies to Stoic maxims, a vast number of which had passed into the jargon of the rhetorical schools and the commonplaces of educated speech. But allowing for all this, comparison proves that Minucius was inspired by Seneca, sometimes consciously, often unconsciously. F. Wilhelm, who essayed to prove that Minucius used some common author who had himself drawn from Varro, Cicero, and Seneca, was nevertheless unable to deny that Minucius had also gone to Seneca directly. The closeness of Minucius to Cicero and Seneca has been used as an argument in favour of his priority to Tertullian.

More important than the influence of Seneca upon the language, images, and syntax of Minucius is that upon his ideas. Not only in shape and form but also in teaching would the *Octavius* have been a very different composition but for Seneca. The destructive criticism of the heathen gods, cults, priesthood, and popular fanaticism, the constructive homiletic on the purity of worship demanded by the One True God, the answer to the problem of the suffering of the guiltless, and the glorification of the martyrs, all come from Seneca, chiefly from his *de Providentia*, *de Superstitione*, and *Epistolae*. The first of these books would easily provide the bridge over which an earnest man might pass to the consideration of Christian theology, and was, perhaps, the very one which Minucius took as he was led to his conversion.

It only remains to refer to the traces of Lucan which have been supposed to exist in Minucius. The resemblances

are too faint to show that Minucius had read the *Pharsalia* of Lucan. They are instances of injustice (Min. v. 12 ; *Phars.* vii. 446), on there being no place in the Empire for two rulers (Min. xviii. 6 ; *Phars.* i. 111), and on the contortions of the mad devotees (Min. xxvii. 3 ; *Phars.* v. 172).

CHAPTER V

The Objective of Minucius

Before an answer can be given to the question, what was the special aim which Minucius had in his mind when writing the *Octavius*, it will be necessary to examine the nature of the religious teaching therein and the various ways in which it has been accounted for. The Christianity of this dialogue is so meagre that its fundamental and distinctive dogmas appear either very faintly or not at all, with the exception of the hope of a future life based upon the Crucified, who is not even named. From Minucius alone we should get no idea of the Person and the work of Christ. There is no hint of Him being the Logos or the Son or the Messiah, or that He was born of a Virgin. Minucius does not even show any consciousness of Christ as the Redeemer, and, indeed, does not speak of man being bound in sin and in need of redemption. He admits that the primary Object of the Christian cult was crucified, but says nothing about His Resurrection and Ascension. We look in vain for the miracles of Christ and the preaching of the Gospel. Neither the Apostles nor the ministerial orders of the Church come into view.[1] No one could gather from the *Octavius* any information concerning the Christian way of salvation, or the ceremonies of Christian worship, or the Sacraments. Minucius does not even cite the evidence of the Scriptures except once or twice in a very obscure manner; in fact, he seems deliberately to cite and quote the writings of the heathen philosophers in their place, and at some length. There is not a whisper of the Trinity; indeed the surface appearances are that this dogma is excluded. The heathen

[1] The heathen, however, recounts a slander about the 'antistes' or 'sacerdos' of the Christians (ix. 4).

interlocutor knows only of ' One, solitary, destitute God ' of the Christians (ix. 5), and it is certain that had he had a suspicion of the Three in One, he would have seized upon it at once as an admission of a plurality of gods, from his point of view. We might have expected at least some ' obiter dictum ' of the Christian bearing on the subject ; instead he rejects the term ' Father ' as giving a ' carnal ' impression of God, and prefers to call Him ' the Parent of all men ' (xxxi. 8). As regards Grace, there seems to be an actual contradiction of it when (xvi. 5) the Christian claims that all human beings possess wisdom as a natural gift because all are endowed with the requisite Reason and Senses at birth. Does he really think that the Christian Wisdom, that is, Faith, can be obtained by the unaided mental equipment of man ? The same thought is running through his mind when he asserts (xvii. 2) that it is by ' Sermo et Ratio ' that we recognise, feel, and imitate God, that is, by natural not by supernatural means also. ' The truth is obvious,' he remarks, ' to those that seek it ' (xxiv. 8 ; Halm's ed. xxiii. 8). Here is no consciousness of the necessity of divine aid. Minucius occupies a position which Justin M. will not adopt at any price. The latter is in absolute disagreement with the Stoics that man by rational powers alone can fully know God. He will not even admit that there is anything in the ecstatic method of the Platonists. We do not come to know God in the same way that we acquire a liberal education (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 3). That knowledge, Justin believes, is given supernaturally, by the Spirit. Further, when men read the Scriptures, they cannot perceive their divine character unless they approach them after having been spiritually disposed to do so, that is, as we should now say, by the grace of God (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 7, 58, 92, 119). But, on the other hand, Minucius may have at the back of his mind the idea of a power which is more than that which belongs to every man by virtue of ' Ratio et sensus,' when, in the description of exorcism, he talks of the faith of the patient and the ' gratia curantis ' (xxvii. 7), that is, surely, either the grace of God directly or through the exorcist who works by Him.

Faith and Grace would seem here to stand properly in mutual relationship. This, however, is but a momentary flash. We should say that the election which bestows upon the Christian the blessing of an eternal life of happiness (xi. 5, 6) must be of grace, by the grace of God, and does not come by his own powers, and so the heathen understands, as is implied in his objection that such a God is unjust. The Christian in his reply is inadequate and unsatisfactory (xxxvi. 1, 2). He appears to agree with the heathen that election is equivalent to Fate, though not to blind Fate, and there is no hint of supernatural action which alters the life of a man if he will only seek it and accept it. The mind is free, he maintains, as against its being bound in the shackles of Fate, and apparently it is sufficient for itself, so that man is judged by God upon his own unaided efforts according to his natural powers. The conversion of Caecilius at the end is not attributed to an act of divine grace in the heart of the heathen but to the eloquence and ability of the Christian argument, which priceless gifts, Minucius does at least admit, must be by inspiration of God; that is, the conversion is effected by natural means, however heightened in force.

It is a matter for regret that in the *Octavius* we read nothing of the two great sacraments of the Church, Baptism and the Eucharist. Some have been inclined to clutch at a straw and to imagine that when Minucius employs the formula 'aquae et spiritus ratio' (xix. 4) he might be referring to the new birth by water and the spirit. Unfortunately, the context will not allow this. The similarity of the language is only accidental. The matter is about the creation of the world, and probably there is a reference to Gen. i. 2. If Cellarius is right Minucius never wrote the passage in which the phrase occurs, and they are merely a pious gloss due to some copyist. We could wish that when Caecilius confessed his conversion he had asked for information about his catechumenate, or, better still, that Minucius, when he had the opportunity while asserting the innocence of the Christian initiatory rite, had proved it by stating the plain facts, so that he might have transmitted

to posterity something about the traditions, rules, conditions, and ceremonies of Baptism in the early Roman Church. From Tertullian we know that before he was baptised Caecilius would have to pass through the stages of at least 'auditor' and 'competens.' Another golden opportunity was missed when rebutting the charge of Thyestean banquets. If Minucius had only given the truth, as he could have done, for Justin did, there could have been no more thorough refutation of a loathsome scandal, and we might have possessed some priceless additional information on the celebration of the Agape and of the Eucharist among the Roman Christians at this early period.

Minucius lays his greatest stress upon two main points: the existence of God, and the expectation of a future life. From these he develops a few simple doctrines. That there is an Intelligent Author of the universe is proved by marshalling the evidences of perfect design in the world and in man. He is One, as is shown by analogy of human and animal government, and by the universal consent of mankind (xviii. 11). His perfections or attributes are that He is Infinite, Eternal, Almighty, Invisible, Incomprehensible, Inestimable (xviii. 7–10), and Omniscient (xxxii. 7). God is spiritual, transcendental and personal, the Creator and Sustainer of all things. He has made man out of nothing (xxxiv. 9). He is the Providential Governor of the universe both in a general and in a particular sense. His beneficent and powerful Providence is shown by His omnipresence in all the processes of nature and even in the thoughts of man (xxxii. 4–9). God is Master of the whole world as of a house (xxxiii. 1). What little there is said of Christ is remarkable for its extreme brevity, coupled with indirectness. The heathen says (ix. 4) that a crucified man is one of the objects of the Christian cult. The Christian reply (xxix. 2) [1] amounts to this: 'Yes, we do adore One who was crucified, but He is neither a criminal nor a mere

[1] The author has not seen the art. of the Abbé Carlier on this passage in the annual of the Catholic University, Louvain, 1894, *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1892–93, pp. 255–275, in which he vindicates the real Christianity of Minucius.

man. If He were so we could not possibly base our hopes upon Him as we do.' Truly an oblique way of expounding the Divinity of Christ. Without giving any name he denies the imputation of sin, and asserts the hopelessness of putting one's trust in the Crucified if He were an ordinary man, thus clearly distinguishing Christ from all other men. Minucius has not said in actual words that Christ is True God, neither has he denied it, but leaves us to wonder, when he uses words reminiscent of St. Paul, to what degree he shared that Apostle's faith.

There is, believes Minucius, a spiritual existence in which are beings possessing a celestial substance. Of these, some are the good angels who attend obediently upon God (xxvi. 11), but there are fallen spirits or demons who have degraded their original nature (xxvii. 8), the authors of all evil, constantly working the woe of man, instituting false religions, aiding magicians, inhabiting images, haunting temples, inspiring seers, manipulating auspices and oracles, producing diseases, crippling the limbs, inducing evil dreams to compel men to worship them, instigating the frenzied dances of the Salii, inventing miraculous stories, masquerading as the heathen gods, and finally infusing the hatred against the Christians (xxvi. 12 to end of c. xxvii.). But the powers of evil are matched against a higher force, that of the Christian exorcist. And here we have the only rite which Minucius describes and the only ecclesiastical minister whom he may be assumed to be referring to. The exorcist adjures the evil spirit ' per Deum Verum et Solum,' [1] and in terror the demon either leaps out of the possessed person without more ado or is doomed to pine away to nothing in course of time. The efficacy of the exorcism depends upon the faith of the sufferer and the grace of the exorcist (xxvii. 7).

Does Minucius believe that God has spoken to man? Two hints in the *Octavius* are consistent with the belief that God has revealed Himself both in times past and in the near present. When on the subject of creation that

[1] One would have expected a formula like that of St. Paul at Philippi: ' Praecipio tibi in nomine Iesu Christi exire ab ea ' (Acts xvi. 18).

which could not, as he says, be discovered by man and must be ' a Deo traditum ' (xix. 4) is, in theological language, by revelation. But some editors have suspected the passage, although the best retain it. Again, the Christian speaker refers with thankfulness to the fact that the verity concerning the nature of God has reached mature form in his time (xxxviii. 7). That maturity was only reached through the Incarnation, when the Son revealed the Father. It would be odd if Minucius really thought that the verity concerning God had been learned by any other means.

The place which Holy Scripture occupies in Minucius is but small, being confined to a few references or implications involving portions of the Old Testament, and some expressions coincident with the language of the New Testament.

Three times Minucius plainly indicates that he regards the Old Testament in the light of an inspired authority. The reason for the destruction of the Jewish nation will, he informs us, be found in their own writings ; it was that they had abandoned God's teaching (xxxiii. 4). Concerning the end of the world the philosophers have borrowed and altered what they had read in the prophets (xxxiv. 5 ; cf. Tert. *Apol.* xlvii. 2, 3). The *Oracula Prophetarum* have been the source from which the most learned (*i.e.* Plato, *Phaedo*, 112 D, 113 B) and the poets (*e.g.* Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 313–439) have drawn for information about the fiery terrors of Hell with its flaming river (Pyriphlegethon) and the Stygian Lake.[1] The following list will be found useful for the comparison of passages which either show or appear to show some relationship : Gen. i. 2, *Oct.* xix. 4 ; Gen. i. 27, *Oct.* xxxii. 1 ; Josh. x. 12, 13, *Oct.* xxxiii. 3 ; Job xxiii. 10 et alia loca, *Oct.* xxxvi. 9 ; Psalms lx. 11, cviii. 12, *Oct.* xxix. 3 ; Pss. iv. 5, li. 17, *Oct.* xxxii. 2 ; Ps. lxxxix. 9, *Oct.* xxxii. 7 ; Pss. xxxiii. 13–15, cxxxix. 1–11, *Oct.* xxxii. 9 ; Ps. lxxiii. 16–19, *Oct.* xxxvii. 7 ; Prov. viii. 29, *Oct.* xvii. 9 ; Jerem. v. 22, *Oct.* xvii. 9 ; Jer. xvii. 5, *Oct.*

[1] xxxv. 1. The authenticity of this passage and of xxxiv. 5 has been contested by Baehrens in the preface to his edition, but established by Carlier in *Musée Belge*, vol. i. 1897, pp. 176–185.

xxix. 3 ; Jer. xxiii. 23, *Oct.* xxxii. 7 ; Matt. vi. 26, *Oct.* xxxvi. 5 ; John iii. 8, *Oct.* xxxii. 5 ; Acts xvii. 28, *Oct.* xxxii. 7, 9 ; Romans i. 2, *Oct.* xvii. 4 ; Rom. i. 26, 27, *Oct.* xxviii. 10 ; Rom. viii. 17, *Oct.* xxxi. 8 ; Rom. xv. 5, *Oct.* xxxi. 6 ; 1 Cor. iv. 5, *Oct.* xxxii. 9 ; 1 Cor. x. 20, *Oct.* xxxvii. 11 ; 1 Cor. xv. 17–19, *Oct.* xxix. 3 ; 1 Cor. xv. 36, *Oct.* xxxiv. 11 ; 1 Cor. ix. 25, *Oct.* xxxviii. 4 ; 2 Cor. vi. 10, *Oct.* xxxvi. 5 ; Philipp. ii. 2, *Oct.* xxxi. 6 ; 2 Thess. i. 8, *Oct.* xxxv. 4 ; 1 Tim. i. 5, *Oct.* xxxii. 2 ; 1 Tim. vi. 7, *Oct.* xxxvi. 5 ; 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16, *Oct.* xviii. 7, 8 ; 2 Tim. ii. 3, *Oct.* xxxvi. 8 ; Heb. iv. 13, *Oct.* xxxii. 9 ; Heb. xii. 5, *Oct.* xxxvi. 8 ; 1 Pet. iii. 7, *Oct.* xxxi. 8.

As to man, Minucius tells us that he was made by God (xvii. 1 ; xxxiv. 9) in His own image (xxxii. 1). Man's will is free (xxxvi. 1, 2). Sermo and Ratio are given to him that he may know and imitate God (xvii. 2). He is conscious of God instinctively (xviii. 11). Man's soul is immortal, and his body will be restored after death (xxxiv. 6 ff.). There will be an end of the universe in one vast conflagration (xxxiv. 1–4). After the holocaust all bodies will rise again, both of the just and unjust (xxxiv. 9, 12), and as part of a general renewal of the universe : ' sed Deo elementorum custodia reservatur ' (xxxiv. 10). He argues, in quite a Stoical manner, that the elements, that is, earth, air, fire, water, do not perish, for they are preserved by God. There will be a future state in which rewards and punishments will be meted out by God in accordance with men's deserts. The good will enjoy perpetual happiness (xi. 5) and the wicked will suffer an eternity of torments in the fires of Hell (xi. 5 ; xxxiv. 12–xxxv. 3). The ignorant of God will share the same damnation as the unjust (xxxv. 4). Probably Minucius is referring to those who deliberately ignore the Deity, and not to those who through temperament or condition might be invincibly ignorant of God.

It is not necessary here to classify the moral teaching of Minucius, though its extreme austerity and puritanism, especially on relations of sex, make it distinctive. Suffice it to say that with Minucius the highest religion consists of a blameless life, of purity, justice, innocence, and com-

passion (xxxii. 2, 3), all of which virtues would commend themselves to a Stoic, except the last. There are sins of thought (xxxv. 6).

Looking back through a vista of so many centuries of theological development, our immediate impression is that Minucius has reduced Christianity to a colourless minimum, and this feeling is increased when we compare his religious system with that of St. Paul. He puts into the forefront the simple ideas of the Unity and Providence of God, the resurrection of the body, rewards and punishments in a future life, together with a severe ideal of morality. A philosophical sect, we might say, could doubtless have gathered all these beliefs from heathen sources, from the Sages and the Mysteries, and have put them forth on the foundation of reason alone, as a philosophy and not as a religion. Minucius, unlike Justin and Tertullian, in the opinion of some, seems to avoid and eliminate all the essentials of Christianity. He is far more insistent upon the purity of Christian morals than upon any specific article of the Christian faith. Judging by what he says, the Minucian religion appears as an internal cult founded upon an unqualified monotheism, serving the All Pure and Good with an honest, a sincere, and upright mind, resting upon Him with certain hope and quiet confidence, a religion which dispenses with external rites, agreeable in its reasonable simplicity and happy in its perfect peace. Nevertheless it would not be just to hold that his theology virtually, from the Christian estimate, amounts to nothing. It is plain to see that behind the modicum of explicit teaching in Minucius there is an implicit Christian dogma. The special problem with him is the question, what was the reason why he is so unique among the early apologists in the degree of his restraint. Minucius does not actually say that Christ is God, when he had the opportunity thrown in his way (xxix. 2, 3), yet it cannot be said with Baehrens (ed. Min. Fel. 1886, pref. 11) that he denied the divinity of our Lord. The abruptness of the way in which Minucius breaks off shows that the subject is deliberately left where it is, but there is no need to deduce more than that he did

not wish to digress from his thesis in an exposition of the Incarnation and Redemption. Instead, he is concerned with the simple charge of man-worship, and he meets it by retorting it upon the accusers. Again, after comparing the passages above of the *Octavius* and Holy Scripture, the result does not prove that Minucius had seen even the closest agreements, although before the time of Tertullian there might well have been in the hands of the Roman Church portions of the Latin Bible translated in Africa, which were current in two or three editions at the end of the second century, in addition to the Greek version. Some of the parallel expressions are commonplaces, some could have been derived from heathen philosophy, or are nearer Seneca, some are perhaps accidental coincidences, but others are more explicable as echoes of the religious language of a Christian community versed more or less well in the Scriptures, as, for example, those which appear in more than one part of the Bible. While, however, he is familiar with the historical prophecies regarding the Jewish nation, and the prophetical apocalyptic element, he betrays no sign of Messianic prophecy. However, it is impossible not to feel that Minucius has absorbed the language of the Scriptures to a considerable degree, and it is his manner, rather than anything else, that is so striking. Where he might easily have gone nearer to the words of the Bible he is content to allude rather obscurely, as the way in which, if it is part of the original text, he seems to be thinking of the brooding of the Holy Spirit on the face of the primeval waters (*Oct.* xix. 4), or to paraphrase, as when, expounding God as invisible Spirit (xxxii. 5), he seems to have in mind the words of Christ to Nicodemus descriptive of the new and spiritual birth (John iii. 8). Other early Fathers, like Justin M., when reminiscent of Holy Scripture, are more obvious. In view of some special object which Minucius may have had, one may recall what Pseudo-Justin remarks in his *Cohortatio ad Graecos* (A.D. 180–240), that he will not prove his argument from the Scriptures because the heathen do not credit them (c. ix).

Apologies of the second century, like those of Justin,

Athenagoras, and Tertullian, have no hesitation in setting forth Christ as the Divine Logos. Cyprian in the *Quod idola*, which draws so much from the *Octavius*, was so conscious of the defect of his model on the Person of Christ that he gives a fairly full account of His Godhead, miracles, crucifixion, and ascension (cc. vi. vii.). Previously Tertullian (*Apol.* xviii.–xxi.), between his exposition of the One God and his doctrine of the Demons, had supplied what is lacking in Minucius, the definite appeal to God's revelation through the Old Testament Scriptures, and their accessibility in the Greek version. Tertullian clearly indicates that written sources of proof should be produced to the heathen (xix.). Fulfilled prophecies, he says, show the Scriptures to be of divine origin (xx.). They foretold the coming of Christ, who is the Son of God, One with God, who became incarnate of a Virgin mother and was the Logos of God. Tertullian gives an account of Christ's miracles, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. There will be a Second Advent in manifested glory. The Christian formula is: 'Deum colimus per Christum,' and, adds Tertullian: 'Quaerite ergo, si vera sit divinitas Christi' (xxi.).[1] Is, then, Minucius quite alone in his sparseness? By no means. Tatian, in his *Address to the Greeks*, also puts the specifically Christian into the background. In a manner obscure to his heathen readers he speaks of the Logos but does not name Christ, nor does he base the hope of the resurrection upon that of Jesus (vi.). There is nothing about Christ as Redeemer, nothing to show that Tatian believed in the Trinity, and he is silent about the Christian rites, with the exception of a hint about Baptism. He does not call the faithful, Christians, but accepts the heathen appellation of barbarians. He alludes to rather than quotes the Bible, but is very near to St. John's Gospel. But he praises the Scriptures (xii. 29), he says that the Holy Spirit is the divine power of the Logos and inspirer of the prophets (xx.), and he teaches the fall of man (vii.). Aristides, in his *Apology*, probably addressed to Antoninus Pius at Smyrna (A.D. 138–161), extant in Greek in the legend of 'Barlaam

[1] The 'regula fidei' of Tert. is in the *de Praescr. Haeret.* xiii.

and Joasaph ' (Buddha), and also in Syriac,[1] has no Logos doctrine, no appeal to prophecy or miracles, and represents Christianity as reasonable, in the form of a simple philosophy. But, on the other hand, he does give in bare outline a rapid account of Christ the Son of God, His Virgin birth, Resurrection, Ascension and Final Judgment. Apollonius was martyred in 185, and his *Apology* and *Acts* are of second-century date.[2] Like Minucius he was a Roman Christian. He professes a very simple form of Christianity. Christ is the Word of God, was made man in Judaea, was a teacher of righteousness, and was crucified. He does not mention the Resurrection of Christ, although he knew St. Paul's epistles. There is complete silence about the Virgin birth, and from the absence of references to it in the Acta of the second century Conybeare (*loc. cit.*) is disposed to conclude that this dogma was not universally accepted, as Justin M. testifies. He further remarks that the Trinity in Unity is not found in Acta until the end of the third century. Apropos of the infrequency of references to the New Testament in the works of the early apologists Dr. Salmon says : ' if only Tertullian's *Apology* had come down to us, it would not have been possible to prove that he was acquainted with the Gospels ' (Introd. to N.T. c. iv. p. 44). The reason is plain : the Scriptures were not accepted as authoritative by the heathen. For the purpose of argument common ground had to be sought elsewhere. Absence of references therefore cannot be urged to establish ignorance of the Bible, and the same may be said of poverty of dogma. For instance, in the *Consolation of Philosophy* neither the name of Christ nor specific Christian doctrines are mentioned, but we should be wrong in concluding that its author Boethius was a Pagan. He was, in fact, a Roman Christian of the early part of the sixth century. All we can say is, that philosophy in his time was still held to have its place in fortifying the mind. While, therefore, we can agree

[1] Translated in J. A. Robinson's *Cambridge Texts and Studies*, vol. i. There are numerous parallels in Celsus, and Aristides may have been one of those to whom the heathen replied.

[2] F. C. Conybeare, *Apology and Acts of Apollonius*, p. 14.

with Renan (*Marc Aurèle*, p. 389) that Christian Latin literature was theologically inferior up to Minucius, that is, assuming his date to have been in the reign of M. Aurelius or Commodus and prior to Tertullian, we are not permitted to infer that lack of literary evidence necessarily shows poverty of actual faith either in that age or in the case of an early apologist. But, with this proviso, it is quite possible that a writer should produce an apologetic work before he was in full possession of all the doctrines of the Christian religion, and so it has been suggested that Minucius composed the *Octavius* while still a neophyte. Keim thought that the dialogue is the outcome of the first enthusiasm of a new convert, and Kühn (*op. cit.* p. 30 f.) has carried the suggestion a step further, alleging that Minucius is silent about the mysteries of the Christian religion simply because he is as yet ignorant of them, and his dogmatic poverty is owing to imperfect knowledge. Another view adds to this the hypothesis that the *Octavius* was composed in order to qualify for admission into the Church, in the same manner as the *adversus Gentes* of Arnobius In answer to this we have only to compare the two works: the latter is a hasty and not very clear production, containing a remarkable confusion of pagan and Christian ideas, while the former is a masterpiece of art, written with pains and deliberation from every point of approach. Besides, Minucius in the very first chapter intimates that he had followed his friend Octavius into the light of the new faith, and, at the time of writing, that was long ago.[1] But if Minucius was by now still only in his catechumenate, what a strange thing it is that such an able man should have been held back from Baptism and Communion for so lengthy a period! Again, if he had been a novice the signs would have been unmistakable. Where are the halting, the hesitation, the obscurity? When he says so little of Christ he displays subtlety rather than ignorance. Upon the subject of exorcisms there is no need to keep back anything, and it is part of his general argument, so here he opens out

[1] *Oct.* i. 1–5. Also cp. v. 1: 'diligenter in utroque vivendi genere versatus.'

freely enough with the obvious air of one who knows all about it. Moreover, it would be absurd to argue that Minucius knew nothing about Baptism and the Eucharist because he does not describe these rites, when he is fully conversant with the recondite doctrines of election and free-will, and contemplates writing a monograph on Fate from the Christian point of view. There are other reasons which preclude the supposition that he was a mere parvenu. If Minucius has copied the *Apologeticus* of Tertullian, as many assert, he could not have remained so ignorant as he is made out to have been, and even if he is prior to Tertullian, he is yet fully as conversant with the common stock of Christian polemic. Finally, he tells us himself that he had more to say (xl. 2), and as he is ostensibly only relating the conversion of one who at the close of the discourse becomes a mere postulant for the catechumenate, we can see the propriety of his breaking off at this point.

If, then, Minucius is not silent through ignorance, can the hypothesis be sustained that he actually denied what we do not find, and was a heretic? Antecedently it would not be improbable that a heretic should compose an apology for Christianity. The pressure of the heathen world in the second century did not discriminate amid the multitude of Christian sects. Justin, for instance, would have been glad if it had (1 *Apol.* vii. 16). Celsus sneers that there was nothing common among Christians except the name. A Christian of whatever views had to defend his faith from the common enemy, and every sect had its martyrs.

Minucius testifies to the existence of parties within the Church or to one outside it. Describing the pure morals of Christians, he says that they maintain the highest standard of matrimonial fidelity, regard even the evil thought as a sin, and, sufficiently accused in their own conscience, need no further witness. This, he tells us, is ' disciplina nostra.' But there are others with whom the ' disciplina ' is ' minor ' (xxxv. 5) ; they are not so strict in some ways.[1] Minucius brings this out as a qualification of the general claim, in

[1] This use of the comparative is frequent in Minucius. The ' disciplina ' is ' minor,' that is, ' too little ' or ' less strictly ' observed.

order to anticipate the possible objection that there are Christians who are not puritans. In a parallel passage Tertullian (*Apol.* xlvi.) confesses that there are so-called Christians who depart from the 'regula disciplinae,' but characteristically hastens to add that they are not held to be Christians by the main body.

At some time between the close of the reign of the Emperor Commodus and the early part of that of Sept. Severus, and when Victor was bishop of Rome, there arrived in the metropolis a rich currier from Byzantium, an educated man and a Christian, named Theodotus, who became the head of a sect which developed heretical opinions. On God and creation he was orthodox, but, according to the authority quoted by Eusebius (*H.E.* v. 28), he was the first to assert that Jesus was mere man.[1] He believed that the conception of Jesus was miraculous, but that He did not become the Christ until His baptism, when He received power to work miracles. It would seem that Theodotus admitted some kind of deification of Christ after His resurrection. He and his followers treated the Scriptures with great independence, altering freely or rejecting altogether what they did not like, and circulating adulterated texts. Victor lost no time in excommunicating Theodotus, but the sect persisted, and in the episcopate of his successor Zephyrinus, another Theodotus, a banker, came to Rome from Byzantium and proceeded to organise the body. To this end a Roman Confessor named Natalius was persuaded to perform the functions of a bishop at a salary of about £75 per annum. His lapse, however, brought great sorrows of conscience upon Natalius. He believed that he had been scourged by angels, and repenting of his heresy, sought readmission to the Church, which, after some hesitation, was granted by Zephyrinus. Now H. Dessau (*Hermes*, xv. 40), discussing some inscriptions found at Cirta in Algeria, in which a magistrate Caecilius Natalis figures, identifies this person with the Natalis who is the heathen interlocutor in the *Octavius* of Minucius, and with the Roman Confessor Natalius of whom Eusebius gives an account. The heathen magis-

[1] Quoting Deut. xviii. 15, Is. liii. 3, and Jer. xvii. 19 (LXX).

trate, he thinks, was converted to Christianity, but not to the orthodox faith. Caecilius Natalis joined the Theodotian sect to which Octavius and Minucius both belonged. It would appear to be necessary that Caecilius Natalis should have become orthodox, but lapsed under the temptation of being appointed head of his old sect at a small salary, and then returned once more to the Church. Dessau considers that the silence of Minucius on the divinity of Christ is owing to this cause. In Dessau's opinion Minucius vouchsafes not a word of his idea of Christ. Replying to the charge that the Christians worship a mere man, Minucius merely denies that they worship a criminal and a man. According to Dessau the only satisfactory explanation is, that Minucius did not believe in the divinity of Christ; he was a Theodotian. We do not agree with Dessau that his theory explains the matter completely. On the divinity of Christ, Minucius has said, as we have seen, too much to be consistent with absolute denial. Further, Minucius is silent upon other important points besides the Divine Logos, and his supposed adherence to the Theodotians would not require such a wholesale rejection of Christian dogmas, that is, if omission implies disbelief. The absence of Logos doctrine cannot be held to be a proof of heresy in Minucius any more than it could in Aristides. Something explicit is required. There is to be found in Minucius, besides, no trace of that reckless tampering with the Scriptures which was so characteristic of the heresy in question. Minucius says but little, it is true, but what there is, shows that he regards the Scriptures with the reverence of one who would never dream that any alteration was possible. The bent of the Theodotians appears to have been to accommodate the Christian dogmas to scientific knowledge. The lost book quoted by Eusebius (*loc. cit.*) provides a list of their favourite profane authors which shows them to have been fond of mathematical and scientific studies. Of these authors Minucius cites only two when speaking of the nature of God: 'Aristoteles variat . . . Theophrastus etiam variat' (xix. 9), which is hardly the comment of an admirer! Nor could anyone accuse Minucius of a liking

for mathematical, physical, psychological, or physiological science! He does, indeed, quote the stock semi-scientific, semi-religious opinions of the philosophers (c. xix.), but his mind is legal rather than speculative, and dogmatic rather than experimental.

So much for the Theodotian theory.[1] We return to the 'disciplina major' implied by Minucius in xxxv. 5. The moral system espoused by Minucius is certainly ascetic and aesthetic. Was it the rule of life enforced by a sect? Does Minucius show contact with any heretical party in his moral teaching? He seems to condemn second marriages (xxxi. 5; xxxv. 6) and to belong to a party which is prudish (xxxi. 5). The Gnostic Marcion, who taught in Rome as early as 142, went to extreme lengths in this direction, forbidding marriage altogether and making continence a condition of baptism. Minucius on the contrary allows one marriage. He is, besides, so strongly monotheistic, that he must have held Marcion's doctrine of a secondary God or Demiurge to be a complete negation of the Christian faith. The same may be said of Marcion's fantastic conception of two Messiahs, his rejection of the resurrection of the body, and his refusal to accept the Old Testament. Another heresy of that time is generally credited with extreme asceticism. Montanism had reached Rome from Phrygia at least by the end of A.D. 200. In its Asiatic form it cannot be charged with greater asceticism about marriage than that inculcated by the Church, even though Montanus did forbid a second union.[2] But as propounded by Tertullian, who joined the sect in 206, Montanism in Africa assumed a painful rigour in the imposition of an excessive degree in discipline rather than by any actual innovations. Even in the *Apologeticus* we can see an immoderate temper which Minucius by no means shares. Thus there is in the latter no leaning towards Montanus, as he was interpreted in Africa. The prohibition of a second

[1] *Oct.* xxix. 2, 3 could be as well interpreted in the opposite way to the views of Theodotus, and said to support the Docetic idea that Christ was only man in appearance!

[2] Cf. H. J. Lawlor in *Eusebiana*, 'the Phrygian heresy.'

marriage was in agreement with an ideal which existed in Roman society, as is seen from many monumental inscriptions containing the expressions 'univira' and 'virginius.'[1] Only a 'univira' or woman once married could crown the images of certain female deities (*Oct.* xxii. 8; Halm, xxiv. 3; Tert. *de Monog.* xvii.). Among the Christians of the first age, in the expectation of an imminent millennium, and under the influence of certain sayings of our Lord (Matt. xix. 12; Luke xx. 35), the unmarried and virgin life was considered to be the perfect state. Even where unions had taken place a platonic relationship was much practised,[2] with the certain result of abuses which Cyprian denounced, but the ideal of virgin marriage lingered on until we meet with it again in the Saxon King Edward the Confessor. Compare what Minucius says (xxxi. 5): 'tantum denique abest incesti cupido ut nonnullis rubori sit etiam pudica coniunctio.' An innocent digamy was allowed by St. Paul to the laity (1 Cor. vii. 8), though he preferred that remarriage should not take place,[3] but he makes freedom from it a condition of ordination (Titus i. 6). Priests were not usually allowed to contract a second marriage in the early Church, and Tertullian argues strongly that the laity cannot regard themselves as free from the same discipline (*de Monog.*). With him concur early Fathers like Athenagoras[4] (*Supplicatio*, xxviii., Justin 1 *Apol.* xv.). Evidence, however, that all Christians did not receive this discipline is abundant in the doctrinal writings of Tertullian, and in the episcopate of Callistus there appears to have been a schism at Rome over his alleged laxity in this respect, along with other matters. Hippolytus, the leader and perhaps bishop of an ultra-orthodox minority, in his *Refutation of all Heresies*, the work of a very learned man, charges Callistus

[1] C. Bigg, *The Church's Task under the Roman Empire*, p. 102.

[2] Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 36, which the R.V. understands differently.

[3] A rigorous interpretation of Matt. v. 32; xix. 5, in the light of xix. 12 and Luke xx. 35, strengthened by ascetic tradition, will account for the tendency thus early shown.

[4] Athenagoras has therefore been unjustly charged with Montanism. It cannot, further, be made out that expressions of his on the inspiration of the Scriptures are consistent with the 'new prophecy.'

with allowing the clergy to marry if they thought fit, and even admitting bigamists and trigamists to the ranks of the clergy.[1] The situation revealed by this quarrel is illustrated by slight but significant references on moral discipline by Minucius. We have already seen that Minucius admits the existence of a ' disciplina major ' and a ' disciplina minor ' in the Christian body. One characteristic of the former is a strict monogamy (xxxv. 6). He has previously said (xxxi. 5) that the rule with the Christians is either to remain celibate or to marry once only. The majority (plerique [2]) prefer celibacy and succeed in maintaining a life-long virginity. There is nothing abnormal about the views of Minucius in this, and so far as moral discipline is concerned, he is clearly on the orthodox and conservative side,[3] that of the ' majores,' while we see that there are some, orthodox also but less strict, the party of the ' minores,' which had succeeded in establishing more moderate views by the time of Callistus. So far Minucius has been cleared of adherence to any specific heresy, either in the direction of faith or in that of discipline, and it can also be shown that he was no heretic on general grounds. A heretic cannot afford to be moderate ; his very position makes it necessary for him to make full proof of all his armour ; yet Minucius is moderation itself. Again, why is it that, if he was a heretic, he does not betray himself ? Men like Lactantius and Jerome have a high opinion of Minucius, especially the former, who regrets that the author of the *Octavius* did not write more. The conclusion is that the contention that Minucius was a heretic cannot be substantiated.

Another reason has been suggested in explanation of the

[1] Cf. Salmon, *Infallibility of the Church*, p. 391.

[2] Perhaps he means in the sense ' permulti.' Tertullian, in a parallel passage, says ' quidam ' (*Apol.* ix. 19). Justin, 1 *Apol.* xv., says he can produce many instances.

[3] There was certainly a trend towards more liberal views at Rome, as Minucius does not say with Justin that second marriages are adulterous. There is no compulsion of monogamy in his day. Even Justin admits the existence of a party which did not accept the idea of a millennium, but they are evidently orthodox, though perhaps belonging to the ' disciplina minor ' (*Dial.* 306 B foll.).

silences of Minucius, that he was bound by the ' disciplina arcani ' to maintain a reserve or economy of doctrine in the face of the heathen.[1] Did, however, such a rule exist, and, if so, to what extent ? Christ himself certainly discouraged a broadcast publication of esoteric doctrine, saying ' Give not that which is holy to the dogs ' (Matt. vii. 6), and St. Paul did not impart the whole of his teaching to the Corinthians at first (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2), while the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has things to speak of which are ' hard of interpretation,' quite distinct from ' the rudiments of the first principles,' and which have been designedly kept back (Heb. v. 11–14). It is also a remarkable fact that the earliest forms of primitive Christian creeds can only be gathered from partial quotations in ecclesiastical writers, which seems to support the view that there was a rule in the ancient Church that creeds should not be written down but transmitted orally. Justin M. in the second century, when writing his defence of the Christians, avoids the use of Christian technical terms ; for example, he calls the gospels ' memoirs,' and describes the ' Lord's Day ' as the ' day of the Sun,' upon which the weekly meeting is held. On the other hand he is a bad witness for the ' discipline of the secret,' as he describes the rites of Baptism and the Eucharist, and the Sunday services in a very open manner, teaching also with no hint of reserve the doctrines of the Logos and the Trinity. Similarly Tertullian, in the *Apologeticus*, fully reveals the doctrine of the Logos, and describes the mission and work of Christ (c. xxi.), the Agape also but not the Eucharist (c. xxxix.). In other works intended primarily for the instruction of catechumens, but which could easily have been read by the heathen, Tertullian gives an account of the rites of Baptism and Penitence. The ceremonies of the Eucharist, however, seem to have been jealously guarded from profanity. Tertullian bears early witness. His reply to the charge

[1] The phrase ' disciplina arcani ' was invented during the Roman controversies of the seventeenth century, and was apparently first used by G. T. Meier in 1679. A deliberate reserve was held to account for the absence of written or clearly written early statements about certain dogmas.

of incest and cannibalism against the Christians alleges the impossibility of any information concerning the Christian mysteries reaching the outside world. From them the profane are excluded as a matter of course, just as in the case of the Eleusinian mysteries, and the absolute duty of secrecy is imposed upon all who participate (*Apol.* vii.; see also parallel passage in Min. xxviii. 2). Elsewhere he condemns the heretics for opening their services to everyone desiring to come in, catechumens and heathen alike (*Praescr. Haer.* xli.). In the *Apology* of Aristides, perhaps half a century before that of Tertullian, there are also, as in the case of both Justin and Tertullian, Christological passages, in its two forms, Syriac and Greek, but the author purposely refrains from saying a great deal about the religion he is defending, because it would be so difficult under the circumstances (c. xvii. in the Syriac). So far as Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150–211 or 215) is concerned, what was concealed appears to have been philosophical explanations of Christian doctrine, on the same principle as that of keeping a knife away from children (*Strom.* I. i. p. 324). If we may add the Greek form of the Clementine Homilies, falsely ascribed to Pope Clement I, to our witnesses for the second century, the author designedly omits the doctrines of the Atonement, Grace, and the Sacraments, because he is writing for heathens. More striking evidence of deliberate restraint from exposing intimate details of the Christian religion to the heathen is to be found in the second-century catacombs at Rome, in the use of symbolic art, which might have for the unbeliever a different and colourless impression, or an unobtrusive analogy with his own religious symbolism, or no meaning at all, to denote profound truths which could be read by the initiated. Thus Christ is represented very subtly in the form of a fish, that is of Ichthus, the letters suggesting 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour,' and the fish could also remind the initiate that Christ is the Life in the waters of Baptism, and is the Food in the Eucharist. The Eucharistic mystery itself appears as a picture of a very simple and frugal banquet, just as the Mithraists drew similar scenes, with a fish and loaves of bread on the table

and a jar of wine on the floor. Christ again appears as the Good Shepherd, quite similar to Hermes Kriophorus. When the heathen saw the Dove he would never suspect that it meant God the Holy Spirit, but his mind would associate it with the birds consecrated to Venus ; and coming upon the drawing of a man with hands outstretched in prayer, he would think it was perhaps the image of Pietas, instead of what it was, the Soul. Jonah and the whale, however, Daniel safe in the lions' den, and the Three Children unscathed in the furnace could hardly suggest to him anything, but the Christian knew that it portrayed his faith in the Resurrection.[1] But whatever the limits of doctrinal economy may have been, they did not exclude some account of Christ and His work, which is given by the author of the *Quod idola*, c. vii., a tract addressed to the heathen, of third-century date, generally ascribed to Cyprian, and by some, though without conviction, to Novatian. As it is largely a compilation from the *Octavius* and to some extent fills in the gaps of that composition, there is evidence here that Minucius was not prevented by the ' discipline of the secret ' from speaking distinctly of Christ. Origen also, in the same century, treats Christian doctrine in general quite openly in his *contra Celsum* and elsewhere. With the advent of the next century comes the best testimony to the establishment of some rule by this time. To begin with, Lactantius (*Inst. Div.* VII. xxvi. 8–10, A.D. 305–310), after having expounded the eschatology of the Christians, says that their wisdom is derided by the heathen because it is not defended or alleged openly, ' ut quieti ac solentes arcanum eius in abdito atque intra nostram conscientiam teneamus.' The object of this restraint is really to avoid contention with those who have no desire to learn but only to argue and make fun, to attack God and His religion. This silence of the Christians in face of the heathen has the unhappy result of being attributed to consciousness of crime, and consequently vile reports are not only invented but indeed believed about them. The clearest witness is Cyril

[1] The same feeling is shown in the substitution of the anchor or the trident for the cross in early Christian symbolic art.

of Jerusalem, who in his well-known Catechetical lectures (A.D. 348), both to baptismal candidates and to neophytes, forbids (i. 12) his hearers to reveal what they have heard to catechumens and to the heathen, the same prohibition attaching to the whole book. When he speaks of the Eucharist to the ' competentes ' his allusions are carefully kept vague.

The force of unwritten tradition is pleaded by Basil, *de Spiritu Sancto* (A.D. 374, par. 66). Secret teaching from apostolic sources, not written authority, is responsible for the sign of the cross, turning to the East in prayer, the Epiklesis at the Eucharist, the non-Scriptural portions of that service before and after the Consecration, and the Benediction of the water at Baptism. ' Where,' asks Basil, ' can we find written authority for these things ? Do we not get them from silent and secret tradition ? . . . Or take the other baptismal ceremonies : where in Scripture do we find the renunciation of Satan and his angels ? Are we not indebted to this esoteric and secret teaching which our fathers thus guarded from a meddlesome and prying curiosity ? They had been well taught the lesson that secrecy is the best preservative of a reverent regard for mysteries. Was it in the least expected that they would parade in writing their instruction respecting mysteries which the uninitiated were not allowed even to witness ? . . . the original legislators of the Church, Apostles and Fathers, guarded the dignity of our mysteries by secrecy and silence . . . that the knowledge of ordinances may not be neglected and despised by the many through familiarity. A ceremonial observance is one thing. What we openly preach or teach is another.' [1] This is the feeling of Basil on rites and ceremonies : he is not speaking of doctrines. At the beginning of the fifth century Pope Innocent I. will not put into writing a description of the Canon of the Eucharist (Ep. *ad Decentium*, Migne, *P.L.* xx. 553), and nearly half a century afterwards, in *The Beggar or the Polymorph* (Dial. 2), Theodoret shows that indiscriminate arguments amongst Christians or any disputation with the heathen were not indulged in.

[1] Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, G. Lewis, pp. 125, 126.

Having regard to the facts as a whole, such 'discipline of the secret' as was practised in the primitive Church applied more to rites and ceremonies than to doctrines in the earliest ages. Of doctrines the summaries in the creeds involving the mystery of the Trinity were guarded, but for the rest, in the second and third centuries, any individual champion of the Christian faith might use his own discretion in what he said or left unsaid according to circumstances. During the persecution period the fear of profanity and misrepresentation demanded reticence in the face of the heathen. Later, when men began to press into the Church, the natural steps in imparting instruction, which had always been the custom, became very definite and rigid, and the degrees within the Church itself were guarded from the new peril of familiarity.

Is this the kind of discretion which we find in Minucius? In the eyes of the heathen objector the Christians maintain a deliberate silence in public, although they have plenty to say where they think themselves unobserved in retired spots (viii. 5). The Christian advocate refuses to communicate the Name of God for the sufficient reason that he is unwilling to convey a false impression. 'Father,' he says, would suggest a merely carnal nature, and 'Lord' might imply that God is mortal. At this stage he might have gone on to speak of the Trinity, but it is the Unity that he is anxious first of all to establish. A charge of Tritheism would have spoiled the whole effect of the dialogue (xviii. 10). He is anxious to show that the best heathen speculation had arrived at practically the same conclusions about the nature of God as were contained in Christianity, but does not court further overt discussion. 'We know God,' he says; 'we call Him the Parent of all, but we never talk about it in public except we are questioned' (xix. 15), a remark which some think to be sufficient to show that Minucius is bound by the 'disciplina arcani.' In his practice at the Forum, our author boasts that he had never known a Christian prisoner to describe the ceremonies attacked, viz. Baptism and the Eucharist and Agape, even when offered freedom and a bribe (xxviii. 2), an idea which is

enlarged in Tert. *Apol.* vii. The charges concerning these ceremonies in cc. ix. x. are answered in cc. xxx. xxxi., but the obvious replies are avoided, and while the whole suspicion of cannibalism and incest might have been dispersed by a simple description of the innocence of these rites, such as Justin supplies in a frank manner which also gave away nothing essential to the mysteries (cc. lxxix. lxxx. lxxxv.–lxxxix., 1 *Apol.*, Kaye's trans.), Minucius is content with retorting the odium upon the heathen and merely asserting the spotless purity of Christian morals, an attitude which provided Gibbon with an illustration for his contention that the Christians deliberately imitated the secrecy of the Eleusinian mysteries in order to obtain respect for their institutions in the eyes of the Pagan world.[1] Again, in the *Octavius*, we encounter the criticism of the Christians displaying no altars, temples, sacred objects of veneration, and allowing no open speaking or free and open meetings (x. 2), to which the Christian responds in xxxii. 1 by admitting the non-existence of altars, temples, and images, agreeing with Arnobius on altars, though whether he meant that Christians had no altars relatively to heathen practice, and not absolutely, has been the subject of controversy. Finally, there was in xxviii. 2 a fine opening to explain the sign of the cross: instead he is only negative, denying that the fraternal symbol is some mark made in the flesh of the body. One sees that Minucius has repressed himself much more than Justin and Tertullian, and that these do not hesitate to go into some detail with regard to Christian doctrines which Minucius avoids. He might well have used, for instance, the argument from prophecy like Justin, for he believes that the prophets were inspired. The silence of Minucius has gone so far that he even appears trivial by comparison with other apologists. What is found in them shows that no rule of any kind prevented Minucius from speaking with considerable freedom on such matters as the Person of Christ and His Work, or from

[1] *Decline and Fall of the Rom. Emp.* vol. i. c. xvi. He gives refs. to Justin, 1 *Apol.* xxxv., 2 *Apol.* xiv; Athenagoras, *Leg.* xxvii.; Tert. *Apol.* vii. viii. ix.

furnishing some general particulars, at least, of the ceremonies of Baptism and of the Eucharist, and of the celebration of the Agape. That discretion in early Christian writers, which later controversialists have thought could cover every omission or obscurity, under the invented term 'disciplina arcani,' cannot even account for such muteness as that adopted by Minucius. The reason still must be sought elsewhere.

Minucius did not belong to any heretical sect, as we have seen above. Suppose, however, that we have been mistaken in thinking that he was of the not infrequently met with type of philosophic Christian in the early ages of the Church whose somewhat Stoical colouring does not deprive him of orthodoxy, and that he had, in fact, formed a system of his own, rejecting and accepting what he pleased of Christianity, a quite personal religion, which is really heterodox, so that Minucius, in the *Octavius*, is only presenting his own conclusions? There are those who can see in him little more than the philosopher, the rationalist, a sort of Comte of the primitive Church, an 'intelligent positivist,' who had made a syncretism of what he thought certain in philosophy, and had combined it with the moral ideas of justice, philanthropy, and purity to form a religion of humanity, an 'eclectic spiritualism.'[1] But we cannot agree that Minucius cares above all to establish the legitimacy of metaphysic and that, consequently, revelation and redemption are excluded from his scheme. Nor, again, do we think that Bährens[2] has sufficient grounds for describing Minucius as a mere rationalist, a 'precursor of Strauss and Renan,' who would never have believed in the Divinity of Christ, who is proposing to his co-religionists a better and purer interpretation of Christianity and of his own faith. Wherefore, Bährens is compelled to cut out two passages from his text as having been the work of some copyist,[3] on the authority of the prophets, the first (xxxiv. 5) in which

[1] René Pichon, *Lactance*.

[2] A. Bährens, pref. to ed. of Min., Leipzig, 1886, p. 12.

[3] An astute one, surely, resisting the use of 'ex' and writing the 'de' which pleases Minucius, 'de divinis praedicationibus prophetarum' (xxiv. 5) and 'de oraculis prophetarum' (xxxv. 1).

Minucius says that, on the end of the world, the philosophers have imitated the prophets, and the second (xxxv. 1) referring to the revelations of demons and of the oracles of the prophets on the torments of the damned. Bährens thinks that these passages can be dismissed with an *a priori* argument that Minucius could not possibly have put the prophets before the philosophers, since his object is to exhibit Christianity in a new form, as a better and purer interpretation of Greek philosophy. He has not considered that these excisions make the context inexplicable. If we remove xxxiv. 5 we must take with it xxxiv. 6, 7. Otherwise we cannot understand what he means by Pythagoras and Plato having transmitted a corrupted half-truth about the resurrection. They could not alter what they had not received. What, then, was the source of their knowledge? There is no answer unless we have read in xxxiv. 5 that it was the prophets who supplied the philosophers with the information concerning the end of the world and the resurrection, which the latter have muddled. In the same way, if the words 'et daemonum indiciis et de oraculis prophetarum cognita' are deleted from xxxv. 1, Minucius is left with only the philosophers and poets as his authorities for the doctrine of Hell. Can we believe that he accepts the poets in this particular, when he has already condemned them for the specious teaching of heathen polytheism? The probability must be that his source on Hell was what he believed was that of the poets, that is to say, the prophets. If Bährens were right, yet another problem would have to be solved, the extraordinary position of a man publishing a composition in defence of Christianity which was, in fact, an attack upon it! Who would believe that Minucius was either a Machiavelli in controversy or a stupid simpleton? Even Renan (*Marc Aurèle*, 1882, p. 402) stops short of the extreme of Bährens and does not deny the Christianity of Minucius, although he regards it as being of a qualified kind, more an exposition of pure Deism, not that of the 'Pastor' but that of a man of the world, which condemns neither gaiety nor talent nor taste. In the *Octavius*, he says, we are far from the Ebionite or even the Jew of

Galilee. The Christian protagonist is Cicero or rather Fronto turned Christian, loving nature, the conversation of well-cultured people, and arriving at Deism by intellectual culture. Men made on this model would have created neither the Gospel nor the Apocalypse. But the theology of Minucius is at least Theism, as is seen by Boissier,[1] who says that 'the declarations of Minucius seem to amount only to a rigorous monotheism, something like that of Islam.' All those critics who since 1882 have attacked the Christianity of Minucius have been influenced, however, by the work of R. Kühn,[2] to which the whole question may be referred. Taking into account the attitude of the Christian towards the Pagan in the *Octavius*, and the whole tenor of the dialogue, Kühn arrives at certain conclusions. Minucius as a philosopher appears as an eclectic of predominantly Stoic colouring, not as a close adherent of the popular Stoicism, but inclined to it. The exceptional position which he gives to Seneca, who is not named, and to Plato, allows the conclusion that the opinions of these two philosophers formed the foundation of the way in which Minucius looked at things. But he exhibits independent philosophical judgment, as in his remarks on Democritus, Epicurus, Xenophon, Ariston, and Plato. He sees Christianity as built up on the Stoic principle of knowledge. Christian truth is identified with reason, which is situated in man himself. The highest Reason and Wisdom, the One God is the centre of this reason in man. Consequently Minucian Christianity amounts only to the revelation of a truth to be found in man and in the book of Creation, and the central point of Christianity, revealed truth, is entirely missing. The whole gist of the Christian reply amounts to this, that Christianity is to be preferred to heathenism and heathen philosophy because it is the only true philosophy, a synthesis of all the truths scattered and obscured in heathen speculation, and also because of its superior morality. In the *Octavius* only a few traces of a knowledge of Christianity can be found.

[1] G. Boissier, *La fin du Paganisme*, 1891, vol. i. p. 329.
[2] *Der Octavius des Min. Fel.*, Diss. Leipzig, 1882.

In detail and in general there is an essentially philosophical view of Christian doctrinal material. These considerations lead Kühn to infer that Minucius wrote the *Octavius* shortly after his conversion, desiring, in his enthusiasm for the new doctrine, to break a lance in favour of moral-philosophical monotheism. A great part of the Christian speech is therefore devoted to the One God (xvi. 5–xx. 1), the centre of Christian belief and happiness, as opposed to the heathen divinities. He is not yet a true Christian, for he has not progressed far enough to speak of revelation as the foundation of Christianity. Retaining his philosophical ideas, which he has imbibed in the school of Cicero, the author of the *Octavius* has formed for himself a doctrine to suit them, thus producing an entirely personal conception of Christianity.

Now let us examine some of the passages upon which Kühn relies for the above opinions.[1] Minucius lays down his principle of knowledge, that all men have the sufficient gift of 'ratio' and 'sensus' and an innate 'sapientia' (xvi. 5). This, and the dogmatism with which he lays it down, are not, says Kühn, accidental agreements with Stoicism. We have already shown (c. IV. above) that Minucius has not excluded revelation, and thus disowned Christianity, any more than the scholastic philosophers did when they spoke of 'sensus et intellectus.' As for his dogmatism, we should expect that in a Christian rather than in a heathen philosopher. Minucius is proceeding to formulate the elements of natural theology, and if he is here essentially a Stoic, then it must be admitted that some elements of Stoicism are essentially true. After laying down his principle of knowledge Minucius passes to his teleological argument (xvii. 4), of which Kühn says: 'from the conception of the world as an organism, Minucius Felix arrives, with the Stoics, at that teleological argument for the existence of God which the Stoics adopted from Socrates, and which forms the direct opposite to the Sceptical doctrines of Chance.' Now what has Minucius said? That it is

[1] Kühn has been answered by P. O. Grillnberger in *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Spekulative Theologie*, 1889.

quite obvious to him who looks about him, that the universe is sustained and controlled by some Supreme Will. Doubtless his expressions are Stoical, as we have already seen above, but the doctrine behind them is certainly not specifically Stoic. Many Christian writers in controversy with the heathen have said the same, for example, Lactantius (*Inst. Div.* I. ii.) : ' none is so rude and barbarous, when he looks at the heavens, as to be ignorant of God by whose Providence all that is perceptible is ruled, etc.,' and although he is less Stoical in phrase yet he knows that he is here in agreement with the Stoics. But Kühn puts Min. xvi. 5 and xvii. 4 together, and says that Minucius has founded Christianity on the Stoic principle of knowledge and discovered the Christian God by the Stoic teleology, which is obviously a misunderstanding of Christianity as a revelation from God. According to the Minucian view Christianity arises from the mind of man himself, like any other human intellectual product, and has therefore proceeded from it historically as ' prudentia ' and ' disciplina.' We agree with Kühn that, if Minucius has asserted that all Christian views arise from the human intellect, then he is decidedly wrong. But he has not done so. All that he attempts is to show how much truth, exactly in accordance with Christianity, can be attained by the aid of reason without any revelation, which is precisely what a professor of theology does with each fresh set of pupils in a school of divinity. We have shown above (c. iii.) that Minucius was no slave to heathen philosophy, but an objection of Kühn demands a fuller reply. Octavius says in c. xx. 1 that he has given the opinions of nearly all the most famous philosophers, and remarks that either the Christians are philosophers or the philosophers have been Christians. In the opinion of Kühn, Minucius could not have made his position clearer : he was evidently a philosopher pure and simple : Christianity and philosophy with him were one thing. As a student of ancient philosophy he had been led to the truth of monotheism and to adopt the Christian morality. Kühn is wrong in taking the statement of Minucius absolutely, that the latter really thinks of Christianity and philosophy as

being one and the same, and for the following reasons: (1) Minucius makes the remark not on all subjects but upon one only, the Unity of God. (2) Upon this one topic he has noted the inconsistencies of such famous philosophers as Aristotle, Theophrastus, Heraclides, Zeno, Chrysippus, and Cleanthes (xix. 9, 10). (3) He has cited a long list of philosophers from Thales to Ariston, not as satisfactorily teaching the Unity of God, but as throwing some considerable light upon it. (4) His purpose is evidently to lead up to Plato, who transcends the rest in his doctrine, for his 'language on God is clearer.' (5) Plato therefore is his climax, and probably Minucius has him chiefly in mind when he says that either the Christians are philosophers or the philosophers were Christians. (6) But even of Plato his appreciation is not without distinct qualification. Plato had mixed up religion with politics (xix. 14), and what he had said was, after all, only 'almost what we say' (xix. 15). Subsequently, on the end of the world, he does not conceal Plato's contradictory opinions, at one time saying that the cataclysm will come about by flood, at another by fire, and, again, after saying that the world is indissoluble and eternal, he holds that God can dissolve it (xxxiv. 4). On the Resurrection, Plato shares with Pythagoras the censure for having especially handed down the dogma in a corrupted and mutilated form, with distortions of their own about human souls passing into the bodies of animals. Such an idea may be worthy of a clown but not of a philosopher (xxxiv. 6, 7). Thus does Minucius speak of the distinguished Plato, in spite of the fact that on God he thinks the language of that philosopher was in some degree 'heavenly.' (7) When Minucius refers to Socrates, the illustrious master of Plato, he is not impressed by his proud title among the philosophers of 'the prince of wisdom,' nor by the fact that the oracle had declared him to be the wisest of men (xiii. 1, 2), which the heathen speaker in the *Octavius* has put forward as sufficient reason for the Christians to follow him also as their guide, but, in spite of Socrates having knowledge of demons (xxvi. 9), he calls him 'Scurra Atticus,' 'confessedly a know-nothing,' whose reputation had been

derived from his lying demon (xxxviii. 5). (8) Of the philosophers in general Minucius speaks scornfully: 'we despise their bent brows.' They have been corrupt, immoral, oppressive, and vicious. As for the Christians, they are proud to have obtained what the philosophers sought with all their strength but failed to find (xxxviii. 5, 6). (9) The point with Minucius is not that Christianity agrees with philosophy but that philosophy to some extent agrees with Christianity. He is satisfied for the present to have reached such a stage in the controversy (xxxiv. 8). What then is the weight which Minucius gives to philosophy? Its value resides in its resemblance to Christianity, and such witness, therefore, as Minucius brings from the philosophers and the poets only stands in so far as it must be derived from some previous revelation. (10) If Minucius really believed that philosophy and Christianity were all one, then it would be necessary for a man to become a philosopher before he could attain Christian truth. But this is exactly what he denies. The unlettered mob of Christians, according to the heathen speaker, are convinced that they have reached certainty on the highest of all subjects, God and the universe (v. 4), and the Christian argues that want of learning presents no bar to such knowledge (xvi. 5, 6). They have not arrived at such a position by means of human reason alone, since the thoughts of man are, comparatively speaking, darkness (xxxii. 9), nor from (philosophic) education and the study of the poets, since this training has been exceedingly prejudicial to the truth (xxiv. 1; Halm, xxiii. 1). It is admitted that the certainty on supreme matters claimed by untrained, illiterate Christians of the meanest occupations has not yet rewarded the efforts of the greatest philosophers (v. 4), but it is a fact to be proud of, that these Christians have succeeded where the rest have failed (xxxviii. 6). What is the reason? If Minucius does not put it into a positive statement, it is evident what is at the back of his mind. He believes with St. Paul that what God has revealed to babes He has withheld from the wise.[1]

[1] Cf. Carlier in *Musée Belge*, 1897.

The dictum of Minucius concerning the Pagan miracles, ' quae (miracula) si essent facta, fierent ; quia fieri non possunt, ideo nec facta sunt ' (xx. 4), is, according to Kühn, an assertion which is in conflict with Christianity. Carried away by his zeal against the stupid heathen beliefs, Minucius allows himself to make a statement that hits Christian tradition itself. We reply that nothing can be further from the mind of Minucius here than the miracles of Christ, and the question is not concerning them. He is speaking of the ' aniles fabulae ' of heathen mythology referred to in this and the preceding section, Scylla with her girdle of barking dogs who with Charybdis personified the whirlpools of the Sicilian straits ; the monster of Lycia, the Chimaera, with its lion head, goat body, and dragon tail, and vomiting fire, overcome by Bellerophon ; the hundred-headed Hydra of the Lernian marshes near Argos, which immediately grew two heads in place of one cut off, slain by Hercules ; the Thessalian Centaurs, human-headed horses who had the celebrated battle with the Lapithae ; and the stories told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* about human beings becoming birds and beasts, trees and flowers : for example, Philomela turned into a nightingale, Procne into a swallow, Leucothoe into the tree that exudes incense, Hyacinthus into the flower of his name. The sentiment is a commonplace, also read in Cicero (*de Divinatione*, ii. 97),[1] applied by the sceptical heathen to their own ' mera miracula.' It is not a wise one in a Christian's mouth, nor yet the analogous one of xxi. 11, which could be easily twisted against the Incarnation. But Minucius has no consciousness of danger. His mind is occupied, at the moment, with his attack upon the heathen superstitions. He means to say : ' Your gods are now being brought into question ; they have necessity to prove themselves to be gods ; old stories will not do ; let them provide their miraculous evidences before our eyes.' The context allows us to believe that Minucius might have thought very differently of the Christian miracles, which are not of the senseless,

[1] ' Si enim esset factitatum, non esset desitum ; neminem autem habemus auctorem qui id aut fieri dicat aut factum sciat.'

useless, and fabulous order of those he mentions, and there is, besides, nothing else to show that he would have dreamed of applying his sceptical formula to them. But even if he had thought the argument to be applicable to the Christian miracles, what prevents him from having been a firm believer in the continuance of miraculous gifts in the Church, and to have said 'quia fiunt, ideo facta sunt'? In the *Octavius* there follows the polemical section as far as xxvi. 6, in which Minucius attacks the whole traditional religious system of his forefathers, from, says Kühn, a purely intellectual standpoint, and not from that of revelation. We cannot understand the force of this criticism. What need had Minucius of revelation to expose such a bundle of nonsense? And in this he is, besides, only one of a crowd of Christian apologists who have done the same, including Lactantius, Arnobius, and Augustine. We next come to angels and the government of the world. Minucius remarks (xxxiii. 1): 'Kings are cognisant of everything in their realms through the confidences of their officials. God has no need of such reports, since we live not merely in His sight but even in His bosom.' To Kühn's mind, this is one of the most striking deviations from Christianity. Insignificant as the passage at first appears, it becomes important in the light of the general Christian apologetic doctrine of the angels. Minucius knows nothing of the part of the angels in the government of the world which both Justin and Athenagoras give them. The dominant thought with Minucius is the independent sovereignty of the 'One True God' (cf. xvii. 4; xviii. 3, 7), leaving no room for agents or any delegated authority. To answer this, we must again look at the context to understand the exact bearing of what Minucius says. Caecilius has objected (x. 5) that, according to the Christians, God is present everywhere, never still, shamelessly curious, at hand in everything, a wanderer from place to place. He cannot attend to details if He is occupied with the whole, nor can He be of service to the whole if He is occupied with particulars. The reply of Octavius amounts to this: Kings need the assistance of others to know what is going on in their realms, but

God does not. There is nothing opposed to Christianity here: if so, we should have to believe that Justin and Athenagoras thought that God in fact required the assistance of angels in order to know what was going on in the world! It follows that Minucius has not denied the office of the angels in the operations of Divine Providence. The last criticism we shall take from Kühn is on xxxii. 4: 'But (you object) we neither show to you nor ourselves see the God of our cult. Agreed. And this is just why we believe in Him, because we cannot see Him but can feel Him. However, His ever-present power we do behold in His works and in all the changes of the world, in the thunder, the lightning, the thunderbolt, and in the calm sky.' Kühn tries to show that Minucius here betrays himself as an actual opponent of Christianity. The question is that of the Invisibility of God. Minucius admits truly: 'we neither show to you nor ourselves see the God of our cult,' and strengthens the statement by adding: 'and this is just why we believe in Him, because we cannot see Him.' So far so good. Minucius is with the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 1). The essence of the Christian belief is that Faith is the evidence of things not seen, an inner conviction independent of, nay opposed to, all sensual perception. If Minucius really means what he says, we should expect him now unequivocally to set aside the Stoic principle of knowledge ('ratio et sensus'), which he has previously adopted as his foundation, for the Christian principle of Faith. But he does nothing of the kind. Instead he proceeds to soften the bluntness of his proposition of belief in God because He is invisible by adding 'but because we can feel Him.' Then he turns to proof, not to his actual proposition: 'we believe in God because we cannot see Him,' but to its contradiction: 'we believe in God because we can feel Him,' saying: 'we behold His ever-present power in His works and in all the changes of the world.' God, then, is perceptible in the expression of His might, and it is by His might that He makes Himself perceptible to us. But this 'sentire Deum' is only possible through 'sensus et ratio.' What, in effect, has Minucius proved

about the perception of God? Not that it is by Faith but through 'sensus et ratio,' the very opposite of the Christian principle of belief. Instead of Faith Minucius puts human knowledge; in place of inner conviction he substitutes external assurance. Here, again, for answer, we must look at the context, and in what immediately follows we find quite the Christian spirit: 'There is nothing odd in being unable to see God. Everything is driven, shaken, and agitated by the winds and gales, but they are not visible to us. We cannot even look into the sun which provides the faculty of sight for all. . . . Could you, then, endure the sight of the Maker of the sun Himself, the very Source of light? . . . Do you expect to see God with carnal eyes when you can neither behold nor grasp your own soul, which gives you life and the power of speech?' Secondly, we must inquire what is the exact object of Minucius in this section: it is merely to refute the remark of Caecilius (x. 5): 'that God of theirs, whom they can neither show nor see.' All that the reply of Minucius is intended to amount to is this: 'we certainly do believe in a God whom we cannot see. The True God is invisible, and that is why we believe in Him. He is the invisible power behind His visible works, which themselves make Him perceptible. Therefore belief in Him cannot be contrary to reason.' In conclusion, on the contention of Kühn we would say two things: firstly that in a controversial work it is above all necessary to estimate the value which can be attached to propositions by reference to their particular settings as well as to the whole tendency, and secondly, that coincidence of language does not necessarily mean identity of idea. To illustrate, when Minucius speaks of his own conversion as an emergence from the murky profundity of darkness into the light of 'sapientia' and 'veritas,' he need not mean otherwise than did Justin when he refers to Christianity as 'the philosophy' (*Dial. with Trypho*, viii.), or Lactantius, who says that 'sapientia,' given to man alone, is 'notitia Dei' (*Inst. Div.* vii. 9, 12). Would anyone say that Christianity was, to these latter, no more than 'sapientia' and 'philosophia'? From Justin it is clearly seen that

philosophy in the second century was a schoolmaster to lead men to Christ. He shows us how the process worked, telling us himself how he passed through the Stoic, Peripatetic, Pythagorean and Platonic schools before he reached Christianity, the only sure and satisfying philosophy (*Dial. with Trypho*, ii. 3). His status as a philosopher was never disowned by him, and he continued to wear his cloak as such,[1] and as a philosopher he conducted a school. Eusebius, consequently, speaks of him as an ambassador of the Divine Word in the character of a philosopher (*H.E.* IV. xi. 157). The way in which philosophy could be held to have been in some degree a guide to Christ appears in Justin's conception of the Logos in a double sense. The Logos is the Son of God, and He is Reason full and entire. Inasmuch as in man there is found reason to some extent, man possesses a seed or imitation of the Divine Logos. Thus Justin says: 'One article of our faith then is, that Christ is the First-begotten of God, and we have already proved Him to be the very Logos, or universal Reason, of which mankind are all partakers; and therefore those who live by reason are in some sort Christians . . . Socrates and Heraclitus . . . Abraham . . . Elias.'[2] Again (1 *Apol.* v.) he says that Socrates used his share of reason in his attempt to banish error, but the Logos or Reason itself became incarnate in order to destroy the kingdom of darkness. That is, Justin believed that Socrates had been instructed by the Logos before the Incarnation. Justin, then, thought that the Logos had been teaching all mankind, the Gentiles as well as the Hebrews, and had, in some measure, inspired the greatest philosophers, which explains why he can write as follows: 'If, then, we hold some opinions near of kin to the poets and philosophers in greatest repute among you, and others of a diviner strain, and far above out of their sight, and have demonstration on our side into the bargain, why are we to be thus unjustly hated? For in saying that all things were made in this beautiful order by God, what do we seem to say more than Plato? When we teach a

[1] Even Tertullian retained his 'pallium.'

[2] Kaye's Justin M., 1 *Apol.* c. lxi.; cf. pp. 52, 53.

general conflagration, what do we teach more than the Stoics? When we assert departed souls to be in a state of sensibility, and the wicked to be in torments, but the good free from pain and in a blissful condition, we assert no more than your poets and philosophers.[1] The conclusion is, that Justin does not hesitate to use the philosophers in support of Christian truth, because he really believed that they had inculcated some rudiments of Christian doctrine. What they had possessed in a very small measure the Christians now enjoyed in full, and were therefore the only true and complete philosophers. Nor could we expect otherwise of such a man as Justin, before his conversion well educated in heathen learning, and the same may be said of Minucius Felix.

The above discussion of the nature of the religious teaching in the *Octavius* clears the ground for decision upon the special aim which its writer had in view. We have seen the significance of the omissions, which are not accidental, and which effect the unity of the design. The arguments are arrested. We have not an apology in the true sense of the word, but rather in a restrained or negative sense.[2] A simple justification is undertaken, amounting to a defence of the normal character of Christian theology and of the innocence of Christian morals. The author himself tells us as much in the opening words of the reply of Octavius (xvi. 1), in which he says that he will speak to the best of his ability, with the object of washing away the stains of bitter censure by means of the stream of truth.[3] Keim thought that the real author of the strictures had been Celsus, but it is, as we have seen (c. II.), improbable that Minucius wished to answer him directly, as he does not even cite him, while he does mention Fronto. The same argument disposes of Crescens the Cynic, to whom B. Seiller (*De Sermone Minuciano*, Augsburg, 1893) sees a reference in xxxviii. 5 where the philosophers are charged with

[1] Kaye's Justin M., 1 *Apol.* xxviii.

[2] Monceaux, *op. cit.* tome 1, p. 491.

[3] Min. has turned the ' flumine inanium verborum ' of Cic. *de N.D.* II. vii. 20, into ' verborum veracium flumine.'

arrogance and tyranny, and with garrulity about the sinfulness of the vices which they practised themselves. While this may fit the character of the Cynics, from Diogenes onward, very well in general, and of Crescens the persecutor of Justin M. in particular (2 *Apol.* iii.), assertive and ostentatious as that enemy to Christianity was, and actuated by an unworthy professional jealousy, yet it is far too vague an agreement to become the basis of a conjecture. The contention of Renan and M. Schanz, that the *Octavius* is nothing more or less than a reply to an oration of Fronto against the Christians, has been referred to in chapter II. Although Minucius must have read some attack by Fronto, and probably used a portion of the discourse, neither does the Pagan case as a whole in the *Octavius* present itself substantially as a popular onslaught on the Christians, couched, as we should expect, in the fiery and uncompromising aggressiveness of the persecutor, nor does the Christian reply strike us as simply an indignant answer to unjust accusations. If the *Octavius* had been designed merely to refute Fronto, we can only wonder at the naïve method of the author, who writes a dialogue on the model of the *de Natura Deorum* in a calm and scholarly manner in order to repel a violent adversary. The probability is all against the Frontonian motive. These suggestions are all based on the idea that Caecilius stands for someone else, and that the dialogue is altogether artificial. Accepting the opposite view, that the characters are real and that the dialogue did actually take place, A. Elter [1] considers that the object of Minucius was simply to erect a literary monument to his deceased friend Octavius, which, of course, would explain its dogmatic poverty. The *Octavius* is only a letter which Minucius wrote to the relations of Octavius Januarius in Africa after his death, in order to console them and to revive the faith of the African Christians. Suitable titles for the composition would therefore be: 'Consolatio et adhortatio ad Christianos,' or, better, 'Epistola Minucii ad Africanos,' and not 'Apologia ad Paganos.' We agree with Elter that Minucius wished to

[1] *Prolegomena zu Min. Fel.*, Progr. Bonn, 1909.

commemorate his friend 'Octavius,' and that, in the first inception of the idea of writing his book, the memories of the past had warmed his heart to the project, but, as the scheme took fuller shape, we can see the development of a much wider purpose than a mere 'in memoriam.' As for the *Octavius* being a letter to African friends, one glance at the treatise is enough to show that nothing more unlike a letter was ever written, and, indeed, the work of Minucius falls into its place in the considerable dialogue literature of the early Church. Others have thought that we have in the *Octavius* the first of a graduated series, in which only a preparation for Christian doctrine is given, reserving the description proper for projected works to follow. Colour to this theory is given by the admission of Minucius in xl. 2, that there were matters 'non obstrepentia veritati, sed perfectae institutioni necessaria' which will require elucidation 'crastino,' but which can be postponed for the present quite easily, 'ut de toto congruentes,' as the disputants are agreed upon the main points at issue. This might suggest that we have here the first of a progressive series, which takes the religious inquirer or the reader as far as the point 'de toto congruens,' and that the other books contemplated would deal with the 'non obstrepentia veritati, sed perfectae institutioni necessaria,' that is, say, what is contained in Justin M., commencing with the argument from prophecy and the doctrine of the Logos, leading up to full preparation for the catechumenate. The forthcoming book *de Fato*, which Minucius announces, may, conceivably, have covered some of this ground (xxxvi. 2), and if he had continued in philosophic vein, his *Octavius* might stand parallel with Clement of Alexandria's *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, which was followed by his *Tutor* and the *Miscellanies*, in series. If Minucius had in his mind degrees in the inculcation of Christian knowledge, he would have been prepared for it by the system of the Pagan mystery religions, and he would naturally begin with the postulate that complete understanding of divine truth cannot be acquired at the first step, which must be limited to monotheism. Perhaps the popular estimate of Christianity

among the heathen, that it was not a 'divinum negotium' but rather a 'philosophiae genus,' as Tertullian informs us (*Apol.* xlvi.), may have sprung from some diffused knowledge of the Christian primary course, and we come across it again in the *Acta* of Apollonius, where the examining magistrate, after hearing a profession of monotheism from the Christian, manifests impatience at being only treated to a lecture on philosophy (cf. Greek *Acta*, 2–9; 24–28; 36–43). By the time we come to Lactantius we find that the theory of degrees in knowledge is established firmly, the 'primus gradus' being to have the eyes opened to false religions and to reject the evil cults of man-made gods, the second is thoroughly to understand that God is One, Creator and Providential Governor of the world, and the third to know the Minister and Messenger whom God sent on earth, by whom we have been freed from error and disposed to the worship of the True God. These are the earlier degrees 'per quos ad domicilium veritatis ascenditur' (*de Ira Dei*, ii.). According to this gradation Minucius has combined the first two together, but we do not think that such a plan of progressive teaching sufficiently accounts for the special literary form and execution of the *Octavius*, suggesting, as it does, a still more restricted motive; and, in any case, we cannot press xl. 2 very far, as we may have here no more than an imitation of the end of Cicero's *de Natura Deorum* where, in consideration of the lateness of the hour, Balbus postpones his further replies to another day. A preoccupation concerning the date of the *Octavius* has led V. Schultze [1] to form a very different opinion on the exact purpose which Minucius had in mind. Dating the *Octavius* immediately prior to the first edict of Diocletian against the Christians, on the anniversary of the festival of the Terminalia, Feb. 23, 303, Schultze says that the coming storm was foreseen by Minucius, who conceived the desire to set before his opponents the balance struck by him between Christianity and heathenism, with the design of averting the disaster, but his tone of irritation shows that he really had little hope of doing so. The dialogue, there-

[1] *Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie*, 1881, pp. 485–506.

fore, had no foundation in fact. Putting aside the question of the date for the present, we can see three reasons why Schultze has conjectured an improbability. First, it is very odd, at such a date, for a Christian apologist to bring up the antiquated Fronto as the chief adversary, in order to knock down arguments proffered in the time of M. Aurelius. If the heathen were to be persuaded, then their spokesman must surely have been a man of the Diocletian age, when there were arguments against Christianity of a much more serious kind, grave political objections, which had reached a full head. In fact the Pagan case in the *Octavius* will not suit the fourth century at all. Secondly, under the circumstances imagined by Schultze, we should be face to face with the curious situation that Lactantius, thus a contemporary of Minucius, knows so little of him, and even speaks of him in a manner suggesting that he thought of Minucius as of one of the early defenders of the faith. Lastly, the *Octavius* does not convey the impression of a work produced under the stress of any specially pressing circumstances. It is too calm and moderate in tone and too elegant in form to have been an eleventh-hour plea for a hearing, and no writer could have been simple enough to believe that it would be read by a furious adversary already sharpening the sword for the slaughter. A very short perusal must show that this classical dialogue is the production of the leisure hours of one whose circumstances allow him to spend much time in the enjoyment of the finer side of literary art.

The key to the riddle is to be found by comparison with the design which Lactantius had in publishing his *Divine Institutes*, which was to present Christianity as a philosophy, to put a philosophical method at the service of dogmas, in order to gain the philosophically inclined. Lactantius considered his book to be entirely new in this respect,[1] and that the defence of the Church by his predecessors was

[1] It was not, of course, for, as Pichon says, Christian literature from the outset seems to have entered on this path. For example, Tatian, in his *Discourse to the Greeks*, says that the *raison d'être* of his book is to combat the Greeks with weapons taken from their own armoury. Therefore he deliberately sets aside Christian proofs.

inadequate. He is pleased with Minucius Felix because he had taken this line, but the single work of this author was too slight, and the theme required the full development which Lactantius furnishes in his great apologetic work.

The *Octavius*, says Lactantius, shows 'quam idoneus veritatis assertor' Minucius could have been 'si se totum ad id studium contulisset.' He objects to Tertullian on the score of style: learned though he was, he was not sufficiently eloquent and finished, but a good deal obscure. Lactantius then passes to Cyprian. He freely admits the eloquence, finish, and clarity of the great African bishop, but he had made the mistake of writing for Christians only,[1] and after a mystical manner quite unintelligible to the educated heathen, who probably thought his compositions valueless (*Inst. Div.* V. i. 21). Turning back to Tertullian (v. 4), he says: 'Although he fully pleaded the same cause (that is, in refutation of the enemies of the Christians) in the treatise which is called the *Apologeticus*, yet, since it was one thing to reply to accusers, which is only defence or denial, and quite another to build up, as we are doing, (the framework of that) in which the substance of the whole teaching must be contained, I have not shrunk from the task of completing the subject.' Then he immediately adds that this is just what Cyprian, in his *Letter to Demetrianus* (A.D. 252), had failed to do in refuting that person's scoffing and opposition to the truth. Cyprian had not made use of the material as he should have done. Scriptural testimony was of no force against one who considered it to be fictitious and worthless. The proper way to deal with such a one was by 'arguments' and 'reason,' to show him how ignorant he was of the very first principles, and to lead him on step by step to the light, not to obscure the whole matter by letting out a flood of illumination all at once. It was necessary that Cyprian should have fed his friend, like an infant, with milk and soft nourishment. Therefore, antecedently to the strong meat of the Divine Scriptures, Cyprian ought to have brought forward the human evidences, namely, the witness of the philosophers and the historians,

[1] If Cyprian is the author of the *Quod idola*, this is not altogether true.

so as to refute Demetrianus by his own authorities. As, then, Cyprian was carried away by his Scriptural erudition, Lactantius proceeds to do what he did not (V. iv. 4). Is not this the same general principle as that which Minucius thought so admirable in the execution of his own book? Listen again to his praise of the speech of the Christian Octavius: 'I was completely lost in wonder at the way in which he had afforded proofs by arguments, illustrations, and quotations from authorities, an admiration more easily felt than expressed; at the manner in which he had repelled the evil-disposed with the very weapons of their own armoury, namely, those of the philosophers, and had demonstrated that the truth is not only easy to discover but also agreeable to accept' (xxxix.). We are, in fact, brought face to face with one of two schools among early Christian writers in the West, that which desired to preserve all that was best in the past and to make as much use of it as possible in the interests of the Church, in contradistinction and even opposition to the other, which was more allied to Eastern thought, and whose tendency was to break with Roman and Greek culture to all practicable extent, as we see in Tertullian and Commodianus.

Minucius, therefore, falls into his place with Lactantius, but the *Octavius* has, within this general classification, special qualities which distinguish it among early Latin Christian works, not formally as a dialogue, but in its high art. Its literary form is modelled on the *de Natura Deorum* of Cicero, but while the latter makes the philosophers fight one another, Minucius, though not unconscious of their differences, wishes to reach some agreement with them in favour of monotheism and Christianity. He is writing an apology, but not a conventional one: it is an account of a discussion, resulting in a conversion, put into classical shape, with the employment of every artifice of literary finish. Clearly his resemblances to the great orator and author of the splendid days of the Republic are not without design, since it would have been far easier to compose a defence after the manner of Justin or Tertullian, and the more obvious and usual course besides. Minucius wishes his

readers to notice the elegant form and temper of his work, and this suggests that the circle which he aimed to reach was not the general reading public but those who could and would appreciate art. By these means he was able to suggest the conversion of Cicero himself, had that distinguished adherent of the Academic philosophy been alive. In the *de Natura Deorum* he, as listener, though identified in sentiment with M. Aurelius Cotta, admits that the arguments of Balbus the Stoic seemed to have the greater probability, which is all an Academic could permit himself to say. Put Caecilius for Cicero and Octavius for Balbus, and one sees that Christianity not only occupies the place of Stoicism but positively triumphs where the latter can only gain probability. The friends and associates of Minucius Felix, the professional and literary class to which he belonged, would be as familiar with Cicero's philosophical works as Minucius himself, works which had been the study of their youth and were the delight of their prime. They pick up a little book composed by one of their number wherein is found an ingenious imitation charmingly executed. There are the same grave debaters, employing the leisure of a public holiday in the discussion of the highest matters. The old arguments come up again for a new purpose, phrase after phrase recalls the very words of Cicero, refined restraint and scholarly dignity are in every line. Could the relationship possibly escape them ? Could they fail to be attracted and held in spite of themselves ? And if so, more than half the battle for Christianity was won. Therefore Minucius is far too clever to overshoot the mark. With his object clear before him he takes careful and well-measured aim. He might have added many more chapters to the speech of Octavius expository of Christianity, with the result that his readers would have thrown down the book. But Minucius is determined to be heard out to the end, nay he would write a book that will be read over more than once, and, as a wise man, he knows just where to stop : ' ad propositum satis est ' (xxxiv. 8). Further, the serious-minded Romans of that time were familiar with the writings of Seneca and had been deeply impressed by him, as we have seen Minucius

had been himself. Seneca had, indeed, done much to clear the way for Christianity. In the hands of Minucius the religious sentiments of the great Stoic and even their very language are made to subserve the definite end of conversion. What Minucius had to say on the existence of One God, His Providential government of the world, and on moral purity, would not sound strange to their ears. He conceives the advantage of laying a firm foundation on which to build Christianity for his class, a philosophical one, which requires in his readers no more than reason, love of truth, and a knowledge of heathen literature, since to them the Old Testament is nothing. It is safe to say that such a public would never have read either Justin or Tertullian: if by chance any members of it had, they would have been puzzled by the one and antagonised by the other. Literary circles are generally impatient of dogma and disgusted by scolding. Minucius thought they could best be won by limitation to their own ground. This he himself confesses implicitly (xxxix.), and explicitly leaves all that is beyond, that is, the exposition of the dogmas peculiar to Christianity, for the next stage (xl. 2). He is not making a great defence, like Tertullian, nor publishing intimate details of Christian faith and practice, like Justin, but sending out a pamphlet for propaganda among his own professional and literary set, in hopes that it will clear away obstacles by disarming prejudices. Boissier sees in this a definite artfulness.[1] To the general objection that Christians avoid the responsibilities and avocations of public life, Minucius depicts three members of the Roman Bar, 'causidici' of the Forum, two of them already Christians, and one converted. These men are not obliged to forsake their public practice because of their religion. He shows, also, that Christianity does not destroy the ideal human friendship, for he expresses it in the same terms as Sallust does (*Catiline*, xx.). The Christian equally appears as the fond father in the character of Octavius. In the third place the Christians are seen as not barbarians trampling brutally upon the civilisation of the past. They, like Minucius, know and read the great

[1] G. Boissier, *La fin du paganisme*, 1891, p. 329 f.

philosophers, the only difference being that they understand them in the Christian sense wherever possible. Minucius belonged to a class of Christians at Rome who were 'incorrigibly literary.' They still loved the memories of their youth, and though they read the Gospel they never forgot their early studies in Homer and Cicero. What Minucius does, in effect, is to present 'a smiling and sympathetic Christianity which should penetrate Rome without noise and renew it without shock, and would be happy in guarding as much as possible of that brilliant society, which would not require the proscription of letters and arts, but would employ and so sanctify them by its own use of them.'[1] Much of what Boissier says is just. The object of Minucius was not polemic but conversion, as is indicated by the conclusion of the dialogue in the winning over of the heathen speaker to the Christian side. No great demands have been made upon him to effect this: nothing impossible has been asked. Caecilius has not been required to tear up the pages of his former life and to scatter them to the four winds. On the contrary, he has simply been asked to listen to reason, to concede the principle of fair-mindedness, and to believe, from the testimony of his two most intimate friends, that the Christian community is standing for honesty, justice, and virtue, in the same way as any decent people should. The conclusion of Monceaux is similar to that of Boissier. He sums up the design of the *Octavius* in this way.[2] The work of Minucius is simply a general one, designed to prove to the pagans of cultivated mind that the Deism of their philosophers is the natural introduction to Christianity. In this lies the whole apologetic method of the *Octavius*. He shows his readers Christianity as being simply a better philosophy but one whose adepts are sure of holding the truth and are actually ruling their lives by it (xx. 1; xxxviii. 6). Here Minucius stops, deliberately ignoring all that is not accessible to reason, prudently leaving in the shadow that which constitutes the true domain of the faith,

[1] Boissier, *op. cit.* p. 337.

[2] P. Monceaux, *Hist. litt. de l'Afrique chrétienne*, tome 1, 1901, pp. 496, 497.

mysteries, dogma, the supernatural. Monceaux has come to these conclusions from observing exactly to what people Minucius addresses himself.[1] Negatively, they are not Christians: the book is a defence of Christianity, not an exposition. They are not Emperors, as with the Greek apologists, nor statesmen and magistrates, as with Tertullian, since the legal objections to Christianity are almost entirely ignored. They are not the general public, since the author is content with philosophising, and particularly omits all that might attract the vulgar. But they are learned, honest, well-instructed men, and those who lived in school or in school memories, the élite of Roman society, whose misunderstandings estranged them from Christianity and must be dissipated by proving to them its agreement with philosophy, its entire lack of hostility to the civilisation of that time, to letters, or to high culture. Monceaux is led to this decision by internal reasons which may be put under four groups. (1) The form of the apology is that of a dialogue, made agreeable by a pretty prologue, adorned with every elegance of style, and marked by a witty freshness of expression. (2) The interlocutors are chosen from men of high social rank, with the education and studious character of many of their class. (3) This class is painted especially under the traits of Caecilius, sceptical in theory, yet hostile to dogmatic novelties, which might disturb their scepticism or be dangerous to the social order, and so defenders of the established religion. Such a compromise was familiar to instructed Romans in the later Republic and under the Empire. Minucius Felix well knew this feeling and has painted an historically true picture of his readers in the character and reasonings of Caecilius. (4) In the tact of Octavius, the Christian, we see that he has a special audience in view. When he deals with the popular prejudices of the heathen he subtly compliments his educated friends by suggesting that such opinions are unworthy of them. He makes his appeal to reason, or rather to what this amounts to, the school memories and reading of his own class, to the witness of Pagan thinkers,

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 493, 494.

to professors and poets. And, as regards the specifically Christian parts of his discourse, he carefully avoids what might be fatal to his case in such a court, the monotony and dryness of too much dogmatic exposition.

The question has been raised of how far these tactics of Minucius were likely to succeed. He has presented Christianity first of all in the light of the final and perfect development of truths which had descended through the philosophers from Thales onwards. Tertullian considered the method to be thoroughly bad. To him the philosophers were the 'patriarchs of the heretics.' His saying is well known, that Athens had no kinship with Jerusalem nor the Academy with the Church. He believed that there was grave danger in the Christian religion becoming popularly identified with mere philosophy. 'Incredulitas,' he says (*Apol.* xlvi.), is compelled to admit the innocence of the Christian sect, but, nevertheless, it does not look upon 'veritas' as a 'divinum negotium, sed magis philosophiae genus,' and he goes on to show that Christianity is by no means a merely superior philosophy. In another work (*de Testimonio Animae*) he turns expressly to the same objection. He has, he says, Christian apologetic works in his hands which seek to convict the heathen by means of their own authorities, from the philosophers and poets, showing that Christians have embraced nothing new or monstrous. The effect on Pagan readers was only for them to dismiss such researches as being Christian. Tertullian, therefore, rejects this method, even though it may be shown that there are Pagan authorities for declarations in favour of monotheism. He prefers to take the position that there is nothing in Pagan writers of which a Christian can approve. He calls in another, a new, independent, and universal testimony, the human soul. A section even among Greek Christian writers had a similar feeling. The author of the fragments of the pseudo-Justin *Letter to Diognetus*, belonging to the late second or middle third century, is, for elegance, the counterpart of Minucius, but, probably because his readers were different, he has not the same doctrinal reserve, and he gives reasons why Christians cannot conform either

to Hellenism or to Judaism. Another pseudo-Justin apology, of the same date, the *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, is very uncompromising towards the philosophers. They are sirens, their elegant compositions are dangerous. A man had better flee from them and resort to the prophetic Scriptures. Even if Orpheus and others did bear testimony to One God, this was not willingly but the work of Providence (xxvi.). The author's final word is a warning to his readers that true religion is not to be found in the metrical beauties of language or in high culture, and that it is an error to be wholly given up to these things (xxxviii.). The attempt to bring in the philosophers as allies to Christianity was, indeed, fraught with the danger of leading the Christian apologist not only within the enemies' front lines but actually behind them, against his own side, so that the observant Celsus makes a shrewd thrust by saying that whatever is true in Christianity was borrowed from the Greek philosophers, but the Christians have added perversions and misunderstandings of Heraclitus, Socrates, and Plato. Celsus has not reached the bottom of the question, nevertheless, which is whether reason by itself is sufficient to lead to the highest truth, or is inadequate, and divine knowledge can only be attained by means of a communication from an external source, by revelation from God through grace. It was the apparent denial or at least independence of revelation that was the truly dangerous thing. Athenagoras, another Greek apologist, perhaps a contemporary of Minucius, occupies, in his *Embassy*, the true and impregnable Christian position. Reason alone, he says, cannot lead to truth. The worldly wise are in error when they pretend that they can know God by their own light. The Christians, on the contrary, turn to the divinely inspired prophets, when searching for what must be believed. Athenagoras, therefore, grounds the Christian faith definitely and exclusively upon revelation.

As for Minucius, there are some critics who think that he was much mistaken. Pichon (*op. cit.*) agrees that his aim was that of Lactantius, but with Minucius the fusion of philosophy and religion leaves far too little of religion. He has made the serious error of failing to see that by

assigning so important a part to the philosophers he runs the risk of rendering Revelation and Redemption unnecessary. If Christianity is only a superior philosophy, was it worth while that God should become incarnate and die in order to bring it to us? What guarantee has Minucius that his interlocutor will not stop half-way in this so convenient natural religion? The author does not make the need of Christianity sufficiently felt. Of the profound feeling of human misery and ignorance Lactantius has a little, Minucius none at all. In the same strain but in detail the wisdom of the tactics of Minucius has been assailed by Monceaux (*op. cit.* pp. 497–500). First, he points out that the method had its inconveniences and dangers, in four ways. (1) Hiding a religion, or only letting its probability be seen, is not the best way of preaching it. (2) Content with invoking reason is a miscalculation. It is disgust of reason, the feeling of its powerlessness, that favours the progress of the faith among the educated. (3) All religion, because it is a religion, is in some way beyond human intelligence. If there is not place given to mystery from the first, contradictions are sure to occur later. For example, in xx. 4, Minucius argues that the heathen miracles have never taken place because they do not happen now. If, at a later stage, Minucius should have asserted the miracles of Christ, his adversaries could have retorted his own argument upon him. (4) It is not logical to reduce everything to reason in addressing sceptics like Caecilius. Their conclusion is obvious from the first. They simply do not admit any reasonings as final. We admit the truth of these views in general, but as applied to the special circumstances which Minucius had to meet, their force is not as great as Monceaux imagines. When he speaks of sceptics like Caecilius, what sort of sceptics does he mean? Certainly not the finished professors of the Academy; certainly not men of the calibre of Hume, Huxley, Strauss, and Renan. If he, then, means a less sturdy kind of doubter, say, the up-to-date young man who feels that it is due to his superior mind that he should belong to the ranks of the intelligentsia in vogue, and to affect the lofty rôle of universal critic, we think that

Minucius may well have gone deep enough for the moment, and it was only for the moment that he was writing, not for all time. But, secondly, Monceaux considers that Minucius could only have led his readers to Deism, not Christianity, and he sets out to prove this by tracing the steps which Minucius expected them to take in the progress towards conversion. It is postulated that the sceptics provisionally renounce defiance of everything and accept discussion. No difficulty would be experienced in convincing them of the absurdity of the popular calumnies of the Christians, because no one had seriously believed these tales. The real charges were legal and political, and on these Minucius says almost nothing. The exposure of the follies of polytheism was nothing new. Long had the intellectuals laughed at them. Their only deference towards traditional religion was for political motives, which did not affect their liberty of opinion. Similarly, after hearing Minucius they would believe in the Pagan oracles neither more nor less. His idea that they were worked by demons would only provoke to merriment. Suppose, however, that the sceptics had been persuaded thus far to renounce their prejudices against the Christians, and to disavow polytheism, what would be the effect of the next step, that of urging the analogies between Christianity and philosophy? They would object to these analogies being pushed too far, so as to become nothing more than a play upon words, that the pantheism and the abstract Providence of Stoicism are not at all the same as the Christian idea of a personal God and of an active, individual Providence. But if they were not prevented by this confusion from admitting that Christianity did not contradict profane wisdom, to what had they been led? Not to Christianity at all, but to Deism. This being so, why should they not hold to simple Deism? Minucius is perfectly aware of the grave difficulty before him in proceeding to the next step, to speak of specific Christianity, of dogma, and mystery. Henceforward he can no longer refer everything to reason, can no longer treat it as a reduction to philosophy. His sceptic hearers would at once turn upon him that same weapon of philosophy which

he had used against them. Minucius, therefore, at the end of the dialogue, when revealed religion is about to be reached, throws the philosophers completely over. Therefore Monceaux finds the conversion of Caecilius at the end of the dialogue to be very surprising. The conclusion obviously goes beyond the premisses. Octavius has in no way proved that Christianity is the truth, having said little or nothing about it. It is quite improbable, this sudden change of front on the part of Caecilius ; and, if it was an act of grace, Minucius does not claim it to be such, nor does Caecilius seem to have been the kind of sceptic who was in an agony of despair of arriving at certitude, likely to be touched by grace. Nevertheless, he declares himself all at once to be a Christian. But what does his profession amount to ? He tells us himself : only to Deism and tolerance ; he recognises the Unity of God, Providence, and the innocence of the Christian sect (xl. 2). Before he goes further he will require more information. Minucius seems to be conscious of the gross improbability of this conversion and therefore only describes it in vague terms : ' I admit what has been said about Providence, I submit to the teaching about God, and I acknowledge the innocence of a sect which is now mine,' says Caecilius, ' but there are still some things, not of the nature of contradictions but requisite for complete instruction. To-morrow I shall open question on these points, especially as I am, in the main, agreed.' The term which Minucius applies to this confession is ' believing ' (xl. 4, ' Caecilius quod crediderit ') purely and simply, with no explicit reference to Christ or Christianity. Arguing in this way Monceaux sums up as follows : ' The real conclusion of the *Octavius* would be, not a conversion at all, nor even an affirmation of the superiority of Christianity, but merely a compromise founded on philosophic Deism and on a broad tolerance ' (p. 500). We should not question the justice of these conclusions if we could accept the premiss of Monceaux, that we have in Caecilius, and represented in him, the true sceptic, whose armour of tranquillity and worldly wisdom can scarcely ever be penetrated by aught save the grace of God. Instead,

we rather see in the young man, who cannot pass a statue of the venerable Serapis, saviour and consoler, without kissing his hand in reverence for the deity, whose sensitive nature is hurt to the quick by an innuendo, who flashes up as soon as he is rallied on his gloomy detachment from the pleasure of the excursion, eagerly accepts discussion, contradicts himself by immediately asserting the philosophy of those who thought discussion to be futile in the end, and contradicts himself again by maintaining with the fervour of a votary the truth of traditional religion, a very different attitude from the cold and calculating support of one who sees in it only a useful means of serving social and political ends. We ask, what would have been the verdict of his Academic tutor on such a performance? This impulsive and high-spirited young man has heart as well as brain. He is very little disposed to carry on his sceptical professions to the bitter end. The main obstacle in him is not a spirit of unbelief, but the prejudices acquired by education and through popular opinion. These removed, he is open to conviction. The fact is that at bottom he is not so very far from conversion all the time. It is not hard to lead him to Deism, and it will not be hard to bring him on to specific Christianity if only he is approached in the right way, and Minucius thinks that he knows that way. Who can say how many young men there were in Rome of the same type as Caecilius? Both Octavius and Minucius himself belonged to the same class. The arguments of the dialogue, by their very deficiencies, may have been deemed the most effective method of bringing such men into the Church.

The earliest ages of Christianity were not passed in the midst of an almost overwhelming materialism. The confirmed sceptic was as much in the minority then as now. The idle-minded doubtless lisped in languid tones the question of Pontius Pilate 'What is truth?'[1] and would-be intellectuals would say in superior tones that things are probable rather than true, but with all these scepticism

[1] Yet he was impressed by his wife's dreams concerning Christ. In Acts xiii. we find the Proconsul of Cyprus, 'a man of understanding,' the dupe of the Jewish 'Wise Man,' as he called himself, a sorcerer.

was much more of a modish affectation than anything else. Underneath all this urbanity even the official, the fashionable, and the knowing were not satisfied with this position, any more than the vast multitude was. The devotion to the Greek mysteries and to Oriental cults which marks Roman life in the second and third centuries of our era shows that men were ready to receive a personal religion if only they could be attracted thereto. It is not by chance that Caecilius first comes before us as a worshipper of Serapis, whose attributes were in many ways very similar to those of Christ. The hearts of those who were most prejudiced against the Church were really hungering for what she alone could give, and when Orpheus and Isis and Mithra failed to satisfy, to her they were at last compelled to come. There were many in refined and educated circles then who were sincere men of good will, and amongst them the Christian religion had pushed its way. Minucius the Christian lawyer knows that they are worth winning and can be won, as he had been himself, and for them he writes. He is neither mystic nor theologian, but with the instruments of sincerity and literary erudition he assays to obtain a hearing for the faith, a favourable disposition towards Christianity. We must therefore judge his arguments after having taken full account of the psychological and historical conditions. It had not been necessary for him to adopt a hostile attitude towards the whole of heathen knowledge, and he feels that this fact shows that it will not be so for others. Hence he does not hesitate to make full use of all that the tremendous exertions of philosophy had produced. The main objections to Christianity sprang from its novelty.

Clearly seeing this, Minucius addresses himself to the task of demolishing the heathen case, which he sets forth in his dialogue by simply showing that however new Christianity may appear it is, in fact, and in essence, not new at all, but has been inherent in the results obtained by the most reverenced and ancient authorities. And this, for the present, is enough. Suppose that Minucius had begun by asserting the divine inspiration of the Scriptures,

and had produced their authoritative witness to the Unity of God and Providence, how could he have induced them to believe that these writings were really worthy of more credit than the great works of Greek thought? Lactantius and, in modern times, Gibbon saw the weakness of this procedure. Suppose, again, that he had told his readers that Christ was the Son of God, how then could he have persuaded the Romans that the Christian God was less carnal than Jupiter? Suppose, further, he had told them that the Son of God died on the cross, how could he have argued that He was not really mortal in origin, as the Pagan gods were said to have been by Euhemerus and his school? Far better was it, for the time, to be silent on dogmas. As for ceremonies, these were of less importance than the establishment of the Unity of God and Providence. It would hardly have been flattering to the *amour propre* of educated heathen society at Rome to represent one of their number accepting the whole or many of the distinctive dogmas of Christianity as the mere result of a debate. Consequently Minucius does not make Caecilius do so. When the dialogue ends Caecilius is still an inquirer. He has confessed sufficient to range him on the Christian side. He has been a possible convert from the first, and the design of Minucius is to get his little book read by men like him. We cannot understand why Renan should think that this procedure is only a piece of worldly strategy (*Marc Aurèle*, pp. 403, 404), that 'Minucius is the Notre-Dame preacher addressing easily satisfied men of the world, making himself all things to all men, studying the weaknesses and mannerisms of the persons he wishes to convince.' We do not see in Minucius the tricks of sophistry. His action, like many of the most simple and natural, and therefore exactly apposite, can only appear artificial because it is imagined that success is only achieved by artful design.

Nor is it likely that he had any other object in view than the immediate one of conversion. It is too much to regard him as a conscious prophet of a new Roman age in which Christianity would vitalise, preserve, and transfigure

all that was best in the ancient civilisation.[1] That the influence of Minucius and his school did have this effect, as it turned out, there can be no question. Greek philosophy and Roman morals were, indeed, a way to Christ. The general trend had been towards monotheism and the ideals of justice and purity. This Graeco-Roman temper among the early Christians secured the victory of Christianity over the educated classes of the West, it prevented the collapse of Western civilisation, and secured its development along Christian lines of advance. It is in this sound constructive movement that the *Octavius* of Minucius takes its place.

[1] Cf. O. Bottero in *Rivista Filosofica*, 1903, vol. vi. fasc. 3. He is in agreement with Boissier, but his enthusiasm leads him to read too much into his text.

PART II

THE PLACE OF MINUCIUS FELIX

CHAPTER VI

The Date of the 'Octavius'

Beyond the general desirability that an interesting early work should be assigned with some certainty to an approximate date, there are special reasons why this should be done for the *Octavius*, namely, that its Latinity should be placed in correct position in the historical development of the Latin language during the second and third centuries of the Christian era, that its apologetic and doctrinal significance should be estimated exactly in the history of primitive Christianity, and that a valuable point may be decided in the history of early Christian literature, whether Minucius is the first Latin apologist extant and his dialogue the real beginning of Latin Christian literature, or whether that honour rests with Tertullian.[1] Distinction awaits the critic who discovers the decisive proof. Scholars for a long time have been trying to find it with various results, so that the *Octavius* has been assigned to the reigns of most of the emperors from Hadrian to Diocletian, within the extreme limits of about a hundred and seventy years. But the majority contract the period of probability to less than a century, between the middle of the reign of Antoninus Pius and the accession of Philip the Arabian, thus within the second half of the second century and first half of the third.

[1] For the importance of the date of the *Oct.* cf. J. P. Waltzing, *Musée Belge*, 1902, p. 234; Ebert, *op. cit.* pp. 321, 386; W. von Hartel, *Zeitschr. f. oest. Gymn.* 20, 1869, p. 348; H. Boenig, *M. Min. Fel.*, Progr. Königsberg, 1897, pp. 3, 4.

A further distillation of results would yield a preference for the reigns of M. Aurelius, Commodus, and Alexander Severus,[1] but this process is evidently unscientific in reaching truth, and he who would decide for himself must thresh out the whole question *de novo* and, as far as possible, without prejudice. The difficulty has been that the evidence, both extrinsic and intrinsic, has seemed to turn always upon slender, minute, obscure, or debatable points, and has ultimately become involved in a morass of arguments and counter replies connected with the relationship with the *Apologeticus* of Tertullian, so that to-day many are still of the opinion of Baudouin, who restored the *Octavius* to its true author and published an edition of the separated text from Arnobius in 1560 : ' cuius potissimum Imperatoris temporibus Romae vixerit noster Minucius, nondum mihi satis liquet ' (*Diss. in M. Min. Fel.*). Granted that so far the discovery has not been made that will fix the date of the *Octavius* with the same historical certainty as that of the *Apologeticus*, there is no need to retire from the solution of the question in despair. Cumulative testimony, in the absence of similar internal proof, should suffice.

The first thing to observe is, that the date of the composition cannot be that of the occurrence of the dialogue. The finished elegance of a work of art, such as the *Octavius*, requires time for its execution. In addition there must be allowed a sufficient number of years for the recollection of a day's excursion to Ostia to have passed into a precious memory of friendship which had been interrupted by death. Minucius says : ' nec inmerito discedens[2] vir eximius et sanctus immensum sui desiderium nobis reliquit ' (i. 3), that is, he profoundly regrets the death of Octavius, whose ' contemplatio . . . subtracta est oculis ' (i. 2). How long was

[1] That is, Minucius was either an older or younger contemporary of Tertullian, who was born about 160 and lived to an advanced age, perhaps to A.D. 240.

[2] As a synonym for ' mori ' the classical use of ' decedere,' absolutely, became more and more frequent in later Latin. As for the spelling in the text, the vulgar form ' discedere ' is found in African inscriptions ; also ' de ' and ' dis ' are often interchanged in the script of the copyists. See A. Schöne, *in loco*, Ed. of Min. Fel., Leipzig, 1913, pp. 167, 168.

this event after the debate? In answer we suggest the following hypothesis. (1) If we may judge the age of a writer by the tone of his work, we might well assume that Minucius, when he composed the *Octavius*, was not past fifty years of age. His vigour, vivacity, and enthusiasm are prominent qualities of his style, which one would naturally associate with one whose vitality is at its highest. When he describes the earlier proceedings on the sands at Ostia he is still full of the sheer joy of living. The Prologue is not a production of crabbed old age. (2) Had Octavius lived he would, at the time of the composition of the dialogue, have been about as old as Minucius, that is, about fifty at most, for the latter speaks of him in the past as having been 'a true and loyal comrade' (i. 1), the only one who shared his preferences and was partner in his failings (i. 4). The two friends were, then, close enough in age to have been inseparable 'contubernales.' (3) Circumstances have put geographical distance between them, but Octavius journeys to Rome and at once seeks out his friend. Like a young father he is full of anecdote about his little ones 'adhuc annis innocentibus et adhuc dimidiata verba temptantibus' (ii. 1). Moreover the two men have not been parted long enough for the spirit of the old college days, as we might say, to have mellowed into a tranquil sentiment. The reunion occasions a transport of joy. For two days there is nothing but exchange of news. They give themselves up to a boyish exuberance (ii. 2, 3). (4) Therefore it might not be far from the truth to put the age of Octavius at this time at about thirty, and he would have died before reaching fifty, so that there are twenty years left for speculation. (5) His decease could hardly have happened immediately following the 'sermo' which he delivered at Ostia, as Minucius, when erecting what is in one aspect a memorial to an ideal friendship, would naturally be unable to refrain from some hint that he felt the suddenness of the loss which he had sustained. (6) Therefore, to strike a mean, it might not be far wrong to say that Octavius died about ten years after the dialogue took place, which gives us a useful figure for the composition. Next, it may be asked, did Minucius

at once write the dialogue when he had received the news of the loss of his friend? Anton Elter [1] thinks that he did, and produces an interesting argument. The exordium of the *Octavius* opens thus [2]: 'Whenever I think upon and recall to mind the memory of my dear and faithful comrade Octavius, such tender love of him fast remains (inhaesit). . . .' Observing that the tense of 'inhaesit' is the perfect, Elter renders: 'When I thought upon . . . such tender love of him fast remained. . . .' From this he makes the following deductions. (1) That Minucius must have composed his work at a time when his sorrow for the departed Octavius was still fresh, that is, immediately after his decease; (2) that the dialogue is not fiction but is the report of an authentic discussion; and (3) that its purpose is mainly consolatory. The last two points have already been discussed, and we are now only concerned with the first. Elter assumes that 'inhaesit' is an aorist, but it is undoubtedly the familiar perfect of repeated action. Consequently, the argument must fall to the ground.[3] Elter is wrong in saying that the exordium proves that Minucius must have composed his dialogue immediately after the death of his friend. As we have said above, Minucius would require an adequate space of time to get his work into shape and produce the literary masterpiece that it is. Having regard to the meticulous care with which the text has been written, two years would not be much too long for a busy professional man, so that for the whole interval between the actual dialogue and the completion of its literary form an estimate of a dozen years would not be far out. Such discrimination between the two dates becomes important when trying to fix that of the composition from what may appear a contemporary allusion in the text, assuming, of course, that the speeches therein contained are authentic in substance. Thus, for example, when the heathen interlocutor refers to the recovery of the

[1] *Prolegomena zu Minucius Felix*, Bonn, 1909.

[2] In imitation of Cicero's *de Oratore*, i. 1.

[3] The first part of Elter's dissertation, viz. on the aim of Minucius, has been refuted by L. Valmaggi in *Rivista di filologia*, 38, fasc. 1 (1910), pp. 65, 66.

Roman standards from the Parthians (*Oct.* vii. 4), if this is taken as an allusion to the campaign of 162–163, it will be necessary to put the composition of the *Octavius* at not earlier than 174–175.

'There appears to be no more hopeless a problem in early Latin-Christian Literature,' says Harnack,[1] 'than that of fixing the date of the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix. . . . Closer determination of its period seems constantly to evade us. But this is only apparent, and the fault is with the critics.' He holds that the mistake most have made arises out of an attempt to prove by literary comparison which of the two was prior, the *Octavius* of Minucius or the *Apologeticus* of Tertullian. For the great mass of works on the subject he refers to the *Bibliographie de Minucius Felix* by Prof. J. P. Waltzing of Liège University.[2] Harnack considers that two French critics, Massebieau [3] and Monceaux,[4] have adopted the correct mode of examination. For some considerable time, he remarks, he has been of the opinion that the work of Minucius was not composed in the second century, and he proceeds summarily to dispose of the question in a most decided manner, declaring finally that the *Octavius* belongs to the third century. It will be convenient to follow the order of the reasonings of Harnack.

First of all he lays down seven certain points ('Fest stehen folgende Punkte'). The first is, that the *Octavius* must have been composed between the years 160 and 250. The extreme limits are obtained from the presuppositions (*a*) that Fronto is mentioned in the dialogue,[5] and that it was known not only to Jerome and Lactantius but also to

[1] *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius*, ii. (1904), p. 324.

[2] In *Le Musée Belge*, 1902, pp. 216–261, wherein are enumerated no less than 188 articles up to 1901. Subsequently, in 1906, in the same periodical, pp. 245–286, Prof. Waltzing has continued the work, bringing up the total to 227. During the last twenty years still more literature has accumulated on M. F., which is mentioned in the most recent editions and volumes of reference.

[3] *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, xv. (1887), pp. 316–346.

[4] *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, i. 463–508.

[5] ix. 6; xxxi. 2. His life was from *c.* 100 to 170, or, according to Mommsen, to *c.* 180.

(*b*) Novatian, *de Trinitate* and other writings, (*c*) to Sixtus (*i.e.* to the pseudo-Cyprianic writing *ad Novatianum*), and (*d*) to the writer of *Quod idola dii non sint.* Thus V. Schultze's date 300–303 [1] is entirely untenable. Here Harnack has narrowed down the 'terminus ad quem' adopted by Monceaux, who does not take into account the Novatian and other literature of the third century, and rejects the evidence of the *Quod idola* because he strongly suspects its authenticity as the work of Cyprian. He admits that if the latter tract could be shown to belong to the middle of the third century the argument would be without reply. Monceaux thinks that the extreme limits must lie between Fronto and Lactantius.[2] Therefore the *Octavius* cannot be before Antoninus Pius or after Constantine. However, he brings down the furthest date to about 250, from the consideration that Lactantius speaks of Minucius not as a contemporary but as a writer already old, of whom he knew nothing, except that he had produced an apology, so that one must allow for an interval of at least half a century between the two writers. The conclusions of Harnack are obvious, and no one will quarrel with the first point enunciated by him.[3] It only remains to expand the reasons which he gives.

Novatian, anti-pope in 251, an able and learned man, skilled in rhetoric and philosophy, has left several works, which have been rightly restored to him by modern critics. The principal of these is *de Trinitate*, written, probably, before the outbreak of the schism of 251 in the Roman Church on the question of the re-admission of the 'lapsi' in the Decian persecution. It has considerable merit for its logical clearness and is historically important in Western dogmatics.[4] Jerome is mistaken in assuming

[1] *Jahrb. der prot. Theol.* vii. (1881), p. 485.

[2] Who mentions Min. in *Inst. Div.* (A.D. 305 to 310), I. xi. 55; V. i. 22–23.

[3] So G. Krüger, who published in *Gött. gelehrte Anzeigen*, Jan. 1905, pp. 36–42, critical remarks on Harnack's discussion.

[4] Separate editions by E. Welchman, Oxford, 1724; J. Jackson, London, 1728; printed in Migne, *P.L.* iii. 861. Eng. Trans., Ante-Nic. Christ. Lib. 13 (1869). It is assigned in the MSS. to Tertullian.

(*de Vir. Illustr.* lxx.) that Novatian had compiled his *de Trinitate grande volumen* out of Tertullian (*i.e.* in *adversus Praxeam*), but Harnack is certain that Novatian has imitated Minucius Felix, without, however, giving particulars.[1] There is general agreement to date this work at 250, and if Novatian was martyred under Valerian it cannot be more than ten years later. The *de Spectaculis* was formerly included in Cyprian's works, but is now rightly assigned to Novatian. Tertullian's composition under the same title is the basis, but Novatian here again has many analogies to Minucius, and the relations between the *Octavius* and the *de Spectaculis* of Novatian are evident.[2] In 1900 P. Batiffol discovered, edited, and published (at Paris) twenty homilies in the name of Origen which had been preserved in a MS. of the tenth and another of the twelfth century. Batiffol thought that the Greek of Origen had been translated into Latin, but C. Weyman showed that the Latin is original, and assigned the *tractatus Origenis de libris SS. scripturarum* to Novatian.[3] Two passages, which Weyman (*op. cit.* pp. 575, 576) says have been imitated from Minucius, are (*a*) on the resurrection and penal fires, *tract.* xvii. pp. 188, lines 17 to 189, line 20 (Batiffol's ed.), mostly drawn, and may be emended in detail, from Min. 'porro difficilius est . . . laceratione nutritur' (xxxiv. 9 to xxxv. 3), and (*b*) on the attributes of God, *tract.* i. p. 11, line 27, 'tunc enim aestimatur Deus, cum inaestimabilis dicitur,' which has also been derived from Min. xviii. 8, 'ideo sic eum digne aestimamus, dum inaestimabilem dicimus.' The pseudo-Cyprianic work *ad Novatianum* is directed against the puritan rigorist views of Novatian. Its date is fixed from internal evidence (c. vi.) that it was written soon after the persecution of Gallus and Volusian (251–253). In the

[1] In this philosophical exposition of the nature of God, the first eight chapters on God the Omnipotent Father should be compared with Min. Author's note.

[2] See E. Wölfflin, *Archiv f. lat. Lex.* viii. (1893), p. 17. Compare *Oct.* ix. 2 with Nov. *de spect.* ii. 6.

[3] *Archiv f. lat. Lex.* (Munich), xi. 1900. On the other hand, in spite of close similarities, some have denied that the *Tractatus* are from the hand of Novatian, as the Trinitarian doctrines therein suggest a post-Nicene date, and even the fifth century has been mentioned.

opinion of Bardenhewer (*Patrology*, English ed., p. 199) Harnack [1] has not had sufficient proof in maintaining that its author was Pope Sixtus (Xystus) II (257–258), and it cannot even be shown to have been written in Rome. Against Harnack are also, among others, Benson (*Cyprian*, London, 1897, pp. 557–564), A. Rombold (*Theol. Quartalschr.* 1900, lxxxii. 546–601), who says that Cyprian wrote the *ad Novatianum* in 255–256, and L. Nelke (*Die Chron. . . . und der pseudo-Cyprianischen Schriften 'ad Nov.' . . .* Diss. Thorn, 1902), who attributes the *ad Nov.* to Pope Cornelius, who probably wrote it about 252. But if this tract borrows from Minucius, whoever its author may be, as there is general argument about its ascription to before 260, the extreme limit for the *Octavius* again falls in the second half of the third century, as Harnack says. There has been a certain amount of controversy about the little tract named, after the allusion by Jerome, *Quod idola dii non sint.* In spite of its attribution to Cyprian by Jerome and Augustine, the authenticity of the *Quod idola* has been strongly suspected or rejected by V. Schultze,[2] P. Monceaux, A. Harnack, and others. Some, like Haussleiter, have assigned it to Novatian, and, according to this view, it would have been written before the formal edict of Decius against the Christians in 250. One critic is even sure that it was written in 211 by Minucius Felix, and is, in fact, merely a preliminary condensation of Tertullian's *Apologeticus* made for the subsequent composition of the *Octavius.*[3] But there is no decisive reason for rejecting Cyprian's authorship of the *Quod idola*, and most modern critics, like Bardenhewer, regard it as an unfinished sketch from Cyprian's hand.[4] A comparison between Cyprian's *ad Demetrianum*, xvii., *Quod idola*, vii., and *Oct.* xxvii., has convinced W. Möller [5]

[1] A. Harnack in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Leipzig, 1895, XIII. i. 1–70; cf. 20, new series, 1900, V. iii. 116–156.

[2] *Op. cit.*; on account of style. He dates it at earliest at 310.

[3] J. Révay, essay on Min. Fel. in *Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny*, 35 (1911), pp. 85–99. For Haussleiter, see *Theol. Literaturblatt*, 1894, xv. 481–487.

[4] *Gesch. der altkirch. Litt.* i. (1902). So also Benson, *op. cit.*

[5] *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.* vii. (1881), pp. 757–758.

that Cyprian wrote the *Quod idola*, and used the *Octavius* for the purpose. The first to see the resemblances between the *Quod idola* and the *Octavius* was Fr. Baudouin, who first separated the text of the latter from Arnobius and established the authorship of Minucius (Diss. 2, ed. 1560). The way in which Cyprian uses his material is very instructive as an illustration of the literary methods and ethics of antiquity. He borrows in such a manner as pleases him at the moment, without consideration of order, often quite literally, interspersing matter of his own between the extracts, and betraying no consciousness of obligations.[1] When Jerome (*Ep.* lxx. 5) praises the brevity combined with historical knowledge and fine phrasing of Cyprian in this work, and Augustine approves of the way in which he had refuted the heathen by bringing forward testimony to the truth from their own most famous books (*de Unico Baptismo*, iv.), they are in fact according Minucius great merit at second hand, for the *Quod idola* is only an abridgement of Minucius in the main, with the addition of a short concluding piece from the *Apologeticus* of Tertullian. Therefore the date of this tract is important in fixing the extreme limit for the *Octavius*. Accepting Cyprian's authorship the *Quod idola* must have been written before 258 when Cyprian was beheaded. He had been converted in 246. It might be that the *Octavius* was one of the instruments in that conversion and therefore naturally formed the basis of the first of Cyprian's Christian writings. Thus the limits are 246–258, and most critics are agreed that the *Quod idola* belongs to about 250, whoever was the author.[2] Other works of Cyprian have been compared with the *Octavius*, e.g. *Ep.* lii. (p. 616, 12), *Oct.* xxvi. 8 ; *Ep.* lix. 13 (p. 680, 19), *Oct.* xxviii. 2 ; *Ep.* x. 2, *Oct.* xxxvii. 1 ; *ad Demetrianum*, A.D. 252 *passim*[3] ; *ad Donatum*, xiii. (shortly

[1] See Hartel's ed. of Cyprian, *Corpus Script. Eccles.* iii. for the passages copied from Min. Also see art. by S. Colombo in *Didaskaleion*, 1915, pp. 215–244, for discussion of the relationship.

[2] Some authorities date it at *c.* 245. See Teuffel, *Röm. Lit. Gesch.* ii. sect. 382.

[3] The references can be found at the foot of the pages of Waltzing's Teubner ed. of Min., 1912.

after 246), *Oct.* xxxvii. 7, 8, in one of the most scornful exposures of the hollowness of tyrant greatness, in which he imitates and develops the words of Minucius on the miserable condition of the Caesars.

The second point of Harnack is concerning the testimony of Lactantius and Jerome, who both speak of Minucius. Nothing can be definitely shown from the statements of either, since Lactantius places Minucius before Tertullian and Jerome after him, while both appear to have had no knowledge whatever of Minucius apart from what they had obtained from his book. Harnack, however, prefers the witness of Jerome because he is chronologically accurate, while Lactantius does not seem to give such accuracy any thought whatever. Jerome's testimony should not be dismissed off-handedly, as he had studied the commencements of Christian Latin literature. It is important to note that he not once but many times places Minucius after Tertullian. We shall proceed to examine the extrinsic evidence of Lactantius and Jerome for ourselves, and see if we can agree with Harnack in his preference for that of Jerome. Lactantius (*Inst. Div.* V. i. 21) [1] speaks of Minucius in the following sequence of thought. The Scriptures are despised by the heathen because written in common and simple language. Worldly as eloquence may be, yet ' wisdom and truth ' must have suitable heralds. So far, such learned men as have undertaken the task have not proved themselves adequate. Among such men whom Lactantius knows is Minucius Felix ' non ignobilis inter causidicos loci ' (*sc.* Romae ?), whose *Octavius* shows what a suitable maintainer of the truth he might have been, had he given himself up entirely to it. Tertullian is another defender of the faith, a thoroughly read man, but as far as eloquence is concerned not facile enough, little polished, and very obscure, so that even he has not obtained the requisite reputation. There is one, however, who is ' praecipuus et clarus,' Cyprian, a true orator, who wrote much that is both agreeable and plain, although he also has a defect, that he wrote for Christians only. It is plain to see that

[1] A.D. 305–310.

literary merit is the dominant idea in the mind of Lactantius, but if he is making a list of authors in ascending order of excellence, why does he not name Minucius after Tertullian, and if in descending order, why does he not place Tertullian last, since his criticism of him on purely literary grounds is so severe? We conclude that he is not giving the names in order of merit, but as they naturally occur to him, and that those critics are wrong in asserting that Lactantius cannot be speaking chronologically when assaying the literary value of his predecessors. And now we turn to Jerome, who supplies six pertinent passages. In his patrological work *de Viris Illustribus*, c. liii., Jerome incontestably assumes the priority of Tertullian to Minucius, saying: 'Tertullianus presbyter nunc demum primus post Victorem [1] et Apollonium [2] Latinorum ponitur.' It would seem that some historians had made researches into early Latin Christian literature and had found only two authors, Victor and Apollonius (*sic*), prior to Tertullian, with which result Jerome concurs. In c. lviii. he gives a short account of Minucius Felix. Having shown a chronological sense with regard to Tertullian in the previous c. liii., he mentions a third-century group of writers, Origen (c. liv.), Ammonius (c. lv.), Ambrosius (c. lvi.), Trypho (c. lvii.), reaching Minucius in the fifth place after Tertullian (c. lviii.). Jerome also refers to Minucius in three of his epistles, 48, *ad Pammachium*, in which he writes the order Tertullian, Cyprian, Minucius; *Ep.* 60, *ad Heliodorum*, where Minucius is the fifth following the series Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, and Hilarius; *Ep.* 70, 5, *ad Magnum*, itself also a catalogue of ecclesiastical writers, where Minucius comes next to Tertullian, and is now followed by Arnobius, Lactantius, and Cyprian; and again in his *Comment. in Isaiam proph. praef.* 8, in the list of Christian orators in the order, Tertullian, Cyprian, Minucius, Arnobius, Lactantius, and Hilarius. It is remarkable how the positions of Minucius and Cyprian vary both relatively and absolutely in these lists, but all through priority is given to Tertullian, with

[1] Victor, Pope, 189 to 198–199.
[2] Roman martyr, 185.

whom Jerome is ever constant, as with a sure standpoint. Never does he appear to dream that anyone could have suggested : ' Tertullianus primus post Minucium, Victorem et Apollonium Latinorum.' To him Minucius is definitely after Tertullian, but exactly where is uncertain. Therefore his consistency with regard to Tertullian inspires no confidence. Cyprian is once placed after Arnobius and Lactantius (*Ep.* lxx. 5), and relatively to Minucius, before him thrice (*Ep.* lx., xlviii. ; *Comm. in Is. praef.* viii) and after him twice (*Ep.* lxx. 5 ; *de Viris Illustr.* lxvii.), and we have seen how Jerome varies with Minucius absolutely. If he could have exactly dated Minucius he would have done so, as he does with Tertullian (*de Viris Illustr.* liii.), with Origen (liv.), and, from Origen, with Ammonius (lv.), Ambrosius (lvi.), Trypho (lvii.), then, directly, with Caius (lix.), Beryllus (lx.) ; and when he comes to Hippolytus (lxi.), a bishop whose see he is ignorant of, not otherwise knowing his exact *floruit*, he finds internal evidence of it in an exhortation of Hippolytus ' in which,' he says, ' he indicates that he is speaking in the church in the presence of Origen.' The mention of Minucius (c. lviii.) appears undated in the midst of a group of authors whom Jerome is careful to date, from which the inference is clear that Jerome did not know exactly under which emperor Minucius lived, but imagined him to be a younger contemporary of Origen (185–186 to 254–255). Further, he does not speak of Minucius as if he were well informed about him, for he has obtained from Lactantius (*Inst. Div.* V. i. 21) the knowledge that Minucius was an ' insignis causidicus,' and conjectures ' Romae ' for ' loci ' (*de Vir. Illustr.* lviii.), and all that he can add is that Lactantius had mentioned him. For the rest he is indebted to the *Octavius* itself. We suspect that he makes Tertullian prior to Minucius only because of his greater reputation as an apologist. As, however, Jerome is the first authority for the priority of Tertullian, and if he is right there is no need for further discussion about the date of Minucius, it is necessary to bear in mind that Jerome is so frequently in error in his *de Viris* and elsewhere that it has been questioned whether

he desired to observe chronological order at all.[1] Here are some instances which will indicate from other examples what weight we can give to Jerome in a case where he is himself uncertain. Take the chapters in *de Viris* already alluded to. In liii. he mentions Tertullian (*c.* 160–245), in liv. Origen (185–255), in lix. Caius (who published a dialogue against the Montanist Proclus in the episcopate of Pope Zephyrinus 199–217), in lxi. Hippolytus, a bishop whose see he does not know, but who was, he infers, a contemporary of Origen. (Hippolytus was anti-pope 217 and died in 236 or 237.) In lxiii. Jerome speaks of Julius Africanus (*c.* 170–240). Of these, Jerome certainly knows the dates of Tertullian and Caius, yet he puts the latter after Origen. Again, he is several times unable properly to place writers, who were nearly contemporaneous, between the reigns of Hadrian and Alexander Severus; thus he names Papias after Polycarp; Irenaeus after Victor; Rhodon after Pantaenus; Miltiades after Clement of Alexandria; Heraclitus, Maximus (probably not a Christian writer), and Candidus after Theophilus of Caesarea, Bacchyllus, and Polycrates; Hippolytus after Beryllus of Caesarea; St. Anthony the Great (c. lxxxviii.) after his biographer St. Athanasius. In general what he says of the earlier Greek writers is a hasty and inaccurate extract from Eusebius. For the Latin writers he relies more on his own knowledge, but although he is of such great historical authority, yet he has often been found in flagrant error. One such is the case of Apollonius, who is made by Jerome a Latin writer prior to Tertullian (*de Vir. Ill.* liii.). His defence of the Christian faith was, however, written in Greek. Jerome elsewhere (c. xlii.) adds besides merely conjectural matter about Apollonius to what he had found in Eusebius (*H.E.* v. 21). He exaggerates the statement of Eusebius that Apollonius delivered 'a most reasonable defence' into his having read 'a remarkable volume.' Eusebius says that the judge asked Apollonius to make a defence before the Senate, which in Jerome becomes the request of Apollonius himself that he might make a defence before the Senate. Eusebius

[1] So E. Norden, *de Min. Fel. aet. et gen. dic.*

says that one of the devil's servants betrayed Apollonius, but in Jerome it is one of Apollonius' own servants who did it. More mistakes in translating this short passage of Eusebius could hardly be made. In his Epistles Jerome (xlviii. *ad Pamm.*) cites Victor after Lactantius, and in lxx. 5 (*ad Magnum*) puts Cyprian after Arnobius, Lactantius, and Victorinus, where he is making a catalogue. Under these circumstances there is no special weight in his having awarded priority to Tertullian over Minucius, and we are free to turn back to Lactantius as being perhaps the better authority in this connexion. As Lactantius was an African, and writing nearly a century before Jerome, he might *a priori* be expected to know better the correct sequence of Minucius, Tertullian, and Cyprian. He was, besides, very familiar with the contents of Minucius and has made much use of him. For instance, he cites (*Inst. Div.* I. xi. 55) the passage from the *Octavius* (xxi. 7) in which it is explained that Saturn originally was only conventionally named 'son of heaven and earth' because he had appeared in Italy suddenly, with no known descent. Also he commences his fourth book of the *Institutes* with a literal transcription of the opening words of the *Octavius*: 'Cogitanti mihi, et cum animo meo.'

'A tradition of doubtful authority,' says C. T. Cruttwell in *A Literary History of Early Christianity* (p. 615), 'but probable in itself, speaks of Minucius as a contemporary of Pope Urban at Rome' (222-3–230 in the reign of Alexander Severus). Harnack says of this that research has shown him that this statement rests upon an error, and therefore is to be guarded against as a false hope. We shall see that this is so, if such traditional grounds as exist are examined. Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons in 424, praising the monastic life in his *Epistola Paraenetica ad Valerianum* (*c.* A.D. 432, Migne, *P.L.* 50, p. 719), gives a list of writers eminent for eloquence in the order, Firmianus (Lactantius), Minucius, Cyprian, Hilary, etc., wherein the significance of placing Minucius before Cyprian is entirely negatived by putting Lactantius before both. The opinion of Cruttwell is probably based upon the authority of the Italian philo-

logist and historian, M. A. Coccius (called Sabellicus), who lived between 1436 and 1506, and who is the first deliberately to date the *Octavius*. In his *Ennead* VII. book vi. vol. 2, col. 231, a sort of abstract of universal history, Sabellicus puts Minucius immediately after Trypho, the pupil of Origen, probably following Jerome, who does the same (*de Viris Ill.* lviii.), in the reign of Alexander Severus, and contemporaneous with Pope Urban. What he knows of Minucius is obviously drawn from the mention of him by Lactantius, and from the dialogue itself. J. von Trittenheim (Trithemius), Abbot of Spanheim, in his *de Ecclesiasticis Scriptoribus*, p. 195, has no more information about Minucius than he could have obtained from his book, and oddly thinks that the dialogue is between a Christian and a heretic. His judgment is that Minucius 'flourished at Rome under the Emperor Alexander (Severus), A.D. 230.' Erasmus (1467–1536), in his scholia on *Epitaph. Nepotiani*, does not even know of the survival of the *Octavius*, but nevertheless says that Minucius flourished under Alexander Severus, A.D. 230. So that it is evident that up to the Renaissance historians and scholars simply followed or transcribed the passage of Jerome (*de Viris*, lviii.), and that their testimony, therefore, adds nothing in value. Finally, the fact that the only manuscript we have of the *Octavius* is bound up as part of the only manuscript (ninth century) of Arnobius' *contra Gentes* (303–305, or a little later), as an eighth book, which Harnack says 'is not so bad,' only shows that the copyist was ignorant and a mere scribe.

The third point, which Harnack believes to be settled beyond question, is that nothing decisive about the date of the *Octavius* can be obtained from the hypothesis that both Minucius and Tertullian drew from a common Latin source. There is no evidence to support this theory, and in any case it does not raise a great difficulty with regard to date. Fr. Wilhelm alone has tried to prove it.[1] Hartel[2] main-

[1] F. Wilhelm, *de Min. Fel. et Tert. Apol.*, Diss. Breslau, 1887; *Breslauer philol. Abh.* 2, Heft 1.

[2] W. v. Hartel, 'Patristische Studien 2,' *Sitzungsber. der Wiener Akad.* cxxi. (1890), pp. 18–20.

tains that Wilhelm's thesis is proved, and brings forward a list of parallel passages common to the *Apologeticus*, *ad Nationes*, and the *Octavius*, but this only shows that the first is strongly, and the second in a very minor degree, connected with the third. The question of priority would remain in the same position as before, even if it could be proved that these works came from the same source. This point of Harnack can be admitted without question as regards the argument for date, but the grounds for the hypothesis of a common Latin source will be considered later. The bearing of Harnack's fourth point is that the resemblances in both Minucius and Tertullian to the Greek apologists prove nothing concerning the special agreements which exist between these two Latin authors. Thus Harnack disposes of any attempt to show the priority of either by means of Greek comparisons, negativing the opinion of Ebert [1] that the manner, apologetic art, and tone of the *Octavius* reveal a like parentage to the *Embassy* of Athenagoras (A.D. 176–177), suggesting the same epoch, and also that of G. Lösche, that Minucius has, further, directly used Athenagoras.[2] Monceaux (*op. cit.* p. 488), whose mind, like Harnack's, is also made up about the priority of Tertullian, does not absolutely deny the possibility, but does the affirmation, that Minucius knew and utilised the works of Aristides, Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus. In view of his opinion that the Christian discourse in the *Octavius*, apart from its excellence of form, contains nothing but the generally current apologetic ideas, and is merely the echo of what was repeated in every Christian community at that time, wherever it might be, Monceaux can only regard the question of dependence upon Greek authors as of very little importance. We agree that up to the present nothing has been shown from Greek comparisons that promises to be useful on the question of date. If direct dependence upon Athenagoras were proved in connexion with Minucius,

[1] See the French translation of his *General History of the Literature of the Middle Ages in the West*, by Americ and Condamin, 1883, p. 35.

[2] 'Min. Felix' Verhältniss zu Athenagoras' in *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.* iv. (1882), pp. 168–178.

it would not give a definite date to the *Octavius*, unless by comparison with Tertullian it could be shown that the latter in his *Apologeticus* had also used Athenagoras indirectly through Minucius, but only that the *Octavius* must have been composed after 176–177. If, on the other hand, Minucius could be shown to depend directly or indirectly on a Greek text of established date posterior to the *Apologeticus*, the problem of priority would have been solved long ago. General agreement endorses Harnack's fifth point, that the *Apologeticus* of Tertullian was composed towards the end of A.D. 197. The allusions to the usurper D. Clodius Albinus (*Apol.* xxxv. 9), who was killed at the battle of Lyons on Feb. 19, 197, and to the public rejoicings held in Rome by the Emperor Septimius Severus in the autumn of that year to celebrate his victory over Albinus, (xxxv. 11) have led to the conclusion that Tertullian wrote the *Apology* at that time.[1]

The sixth undeniable point with Harnack concerns Fronto, the only literary opponent of Christianity among Latin writers. The mention of him in the *Octavius* cannot be used to determine the *terminus ad quem* of the composition, because of the long reputation of this orator. Several decades might have elapsed, as in the case of Josephus, who attacked Apion, and of Origen, who replied to Celsus. We shall see how far this can be admitted. M. Cornelius Fronto, 'a Libyan of the Libyans,' as he describes himself, was born at Cirta in Numidia between A.D. 100 and 113 and died between 169 and 180. Following the profession of rhetorician and jurist, he occupied under Hadrian and Antoninus some of the highest offices of state, being consul in 143. In the reign of Antoninus Pius he became tutor to the Emperor's two adopted sons, M. Aurelius and L. Verus, and was still pleading in the law courts. His letters to M. Aurelius both as pupil and Emperor are those

[1] The *ad Nationes* was probably written early in 197. T. H. Bindley in his edition of Tert. marks 202 as the furthest limit for the *Apol.*, as Tert., when enumerating (iv. 5) the laws invoked against the Christians, is silent concerning the edict of Severus of that year forbidding Jews and Christians to make proselytes (Spartian, *Severus*, 17).

of a conceited pedagogue but paternal in spirit. Even after his desertion of Fronto and the pursuit of literary fancies for Stoic philosophy, Aurelius loved Fronto to the last. Most historians agree that Fronto lived until at least 175. At some time during his career he had made a speech, whether in the senate or in the law courts is not known, directed against the Christians. This *adversus Christianos*, only known from two allusions by Minucius, was abusive and contained a scandalous account of proceedings at the Christian Agapai, upon which it was regarded as a standard authority. Whether 'Cirtensis noster' (*Oct.* ix. 6) and 'tuus Fronto' (xxxi. 2) are interpreted, with Ebert, 'our (Pagan) supporter from Cirta,' 'your (Pagan) Fronto,' or, as is generally accepted, 'our fellow townsman of Cirta,' 'your compatriot Fronto,' does not here concern us. The various views have been given by Boenig (*Diss.* pp. 8–9). The question is, was Fronto still alive when he was thus referred to? Bährens (*Praef.* 5–6) and Schanz are of opinion that he was. One can imagine, in our day, that a South African, studying law in London, might admiringly refer to the speech of an eminent K.C., which had been the talk of the hour in legal circles, as having been made by 'one of us,' but not after the lapse of more than a year or two. But at the epoch of Minucius the world was slower and much more conservative, so that outstanding things were more evident and lived longer in the memory. Moreover 'noster' had a certain literary use which had nothing at all to do with time. No one would think that Cicero and Cotta were contemporaries of Ennius because 'Ennius noster' occurs in the *de Nat. Deor.*, or that Seneca must have lived at the same time as the Stoic Hecaton because (*Ep.* I. v. 7) he writes 'apud Hecatonem nostrum.' Fronto's attack would most naturally fall in the reign of Antoninus Pius, and perhaps near the date of Justin's first apology (153–5), in which the charge of incestuous banquets is mentioned (Kaye's *Justin. M. Apol.* I. c. xxxv.). The absurd charge was used to lash the populace up to fury in times of persecution. It appears again in the reign of M. Aurelius in the letter from the churches of Lyons and

Vienne (177) in which frightened heathen domestics charged their Christian masters with cannibalism and incest. Antoninus was not a persecutor of the Christians, but it is likely that the feeling against them began to rise again in his reign, reaching a climax in the 'annus calamitosus' (166) under M. Aurelius. The years 140 to 160 would appear as the most favourable ones for the anti-Christian oration of Fronto and would be the first rumble of the coming storm. M. Schanz (*Rhein. Museum*, L. 1895, pp. 114 ff.; *Gesch. d. röm. Lit.* III. 1896) is convinced that the reply of Minucius to the oration of Fronto was composed in the latter's lifetime, that is, before 169, which he regards as about the year of his death. Minucius, he thinks, must have had a definite text before him, and that was Fronto's attack, to which he twice refers, the ideas of which are substantially reproduced in the speech of Caecilius. This is further supported by the negative character of the Christian reply. All that Minucius could hope to do was to repel the onslaught of Fronto and the educated men of that time, conversion being out of the question. Nevertheless, considering Fronto's position, his anti-Christian polemic was of grave moment and demanded a reply. Schanz is certain that he has overpassed all the critics by a great discovery. Fronto is defied to his face in xiv. 1. It is true that the name 'Octavius' there makes this apparently impossible, but the name should not be there: it is a mistake, an interpolation which has descended all unsuspected through the centuries and led even the most acutely learned astray. Caecilius the Pagan, who has spoken in the literary style of Minucius, although he has used the ideas of Fronto, now challenges Fronto to equal his performance on the score of form. He scorns the archaic affectations of Fronto derived from Plautus. Consequently, if we follow Schanz, we must give this meaning to xiv. 1, that Caecilius says in effect: 'Can our distinguished Plautine, but truly a sorry philosopher, can Fronto match for style a speech like mine?' Schanz is positive that there is not a shadow of a doubt that here we have the picture of Fronto. Every trait suits him, and only him.

The argument must be right. We have already seen that the whole reasoning is built upon the interpretation of 'homo Plautinae prosapiae,' once 'Octavius' is removed. Schanz assumes that the expression could not be applied to Octavius, who has nothing in common with Plautus, and therefore substitutes Fronto who was so attached to him. He concludes that the scornful challenge of Caecilius could only have been made in Fronto's lifetime, while his speech was of actual interest, probably in the reign of Hadrian or Antoninus Pius. But Norden (*op. cit.* p. 6) has exploded the whole argument of Schanz. 'Homo Plautinae prosapiae' is only the trite proverbial expression for 'causidicus.' The epithet 'plautus' first suggests the dog with its flat feet and ears, and then the lawyer who barks and snaps. Caecilius, at the height of his resentment, is pleased to fling an insulting epithet at his adversary, who had formerly been a member of the Roman bar. On the question of the implication of 'Cirtensis noster,' other writers, like Monceaux, believe that Fronto is merely alluded to as an orator still celebrated, as he was up to the barbaric invasions, and that an educated African might so speak of him long after his death. The analogy of Origen's reply (*c.* 248, reign of Philippus Arabs) to Celsus (*c.* 178) furnishes Massebieau (*op. cit.* p. 344) with a conjecture that Minucius answered Fronto after about the same interval. There is, however, a serious historic difficulty, that by the third century the absurdity of such scandalous stories as that recorded in Fronto's speech, and as appear so largely in the apologists of the second century, was recognised by the heathen. But Fronto had a special favour with educated people, and the scandals were perpetuated by his influence. That the misrepresentations did deter the Pagans from Christian doctrine is shown by Origen (*contra Celsum*, vi. 27). When Josephus refuted Apion, fifty years after him, one might have thought that the calumniating fables about the Jews had long been dead, but they had, in fact, become fixed in Greek literature. We are thus led to agree with Harnack on Fronto. There is nothing to prove that Fronto either was still alive or had been very long dead. But

his speech does give us the *terminus a quo*, A.D. 140 to 160, when Fronto was in his prime. Seventhly, and lastly, Harnack lays it down that nothing certain can be discovered by a detailed comparison of the texts of the *Octavius* and the *Apologeticus*, for the only sure result is to find that the same arguments *pro* and *con* are used in both. Tertullian and Minucius are equally charged with plagiarism. If some extraordinary blunder is found in either it proves nothing, because it can be attributed to a later corruption of the text, or to the oversight or ignorance of the copyist. 'It is exactly as with the hour-glass: a slight touch and all the arguments fall to the other side.' To this opinion Harnack has not won many converts. The resemblances between Minucius and Tertullian are more than forms and plays upon words, and the analogy of the sand, dropping at a touch on one side of the glass equally with the other, will not always hold good. Such authorities as Massebieau, Monceaux, and Heinze, to state only those who agree with Harnack on the priority of Tertullian, have not shared his conviction of the inutility of the process. Taken in conjunction with the established date of the *Apologeticus*, the fact that the points of contact are often too literal not to be deliberate transcriptions, must, in the absence of other decisive proofs, resolve the problem of the date of the *Octavius* into the question of whether it was prior, that is, before 197. Harnack is, however, impressed with the apparent indecisiveness of the method, which is, he believes, altogether wrong, and the almost unbelievable 'stubbornness' of historians, in falling foul of it by means of 'tables and juggling with words,' has been the one fault which has caused the solution of the date of the *Octavius* constantly to step back. Only a very few critics have been able to see that the *Octavius* must be taken by itself, as reflecting the ideas of its time in contents and style. From this standpoint can it be shown that the *Octavius* could have been written before 197? Harnack proceeds to supply nine internal arguments to prove that it could not, and arrives at the probability of the period between Alexander Severus and Philip the Arabian, inclusive. We shall give

a fair account of the substance of these arguments in order to discuss their cogency.

1. The dialogue itself shows that Christianity had already penetrated the higher official circles at the time when it took place. Now this movement was only just beginning to appear in the Roman official world in the reign of Commodus (180–192). Consequently it is not very likely that the dialogue occurred even as early as that reign. Therefore the composition of the book, which was at some considerable time after the events narrated in it, must belong to the third century. In reply, one reads of the conversions of officials, and persons of the middle class, from the very first. St. Paul himself was obviously of good birth and probably had private means, which must have opened the way for him to many individuals of the upper ranks of society, some of whom are mentioned in the Acts and the Pauline Epistles. By the end of the first century the tendency was increased, if Pliny meant anything at all when he wrote to Trajan that there were in Pontus and Bithynia ' many ' Christians ' omnis ordinis ' (A.D. 112–113). What was true of Asia might well have been equally true of Rome, and it is probably a mistake to suppose that the first Roman Christians did not include numerous members of the comfortable and respectable class, and that there was not an early movement in the direction of the minor official ranks. In the second century the apologists are witnesses in themselves of the fact that Christians were to be found in the educated class as both writers and readers. Aristides is an Athenian philosopher, Justin Martyr is a leisured philosophical inquirer, much travelled before conversion, Tertullian, the son of a centurion, has had the best of schooling and rhetorical training, is well read in law, acquires the rank of knight, and indicates, in his works, that he is a man of means, with a comfortable household, employing slaves, able to travel in Greece, and to entertain well, having the social views of the upper classes.[1] Would Minucius and his friends, men of assured professional position, be out of place in such company? Justin M.

[1] See *The Theology of Tert.*, by R. E. Roberts, 1924, pp. 37, 38.

(2 *Apol.* xii.) shows that some Christians in Rome were well enough off to keep slaves, and the same is true of their co-religionists in Lyons and Vienne, in the reign of M. Aurelius (Euseb. *H.E.* v. 1). Therefore the rhetorical boasts of Christian poverty which we find in the early apologists do not mislead us. When, for instance, we read that the Divine Word does not make either poets, or philosophers, or orators, but that it does confer immortality, purifying and giving rest to the soul, we recognise the rhapsody of a religious enthusiast (Pseudo-Justin, *Orat. ad Graec.*, A.D. 180–240, c. 5). Celsus indeed says that the Christians only comprise the ignorant and stupid because the rule of the sect is to exclude all others. The propagandists, he believes, are men employed in the meaner trades. But the words come from a bitter adversary, and if they had been perfectly true there surely would have been no need to write an elaborate philosophical attack upon the religious tenets of such a rabble. Eusebius (*H.E.* v. 21) tells us that in the reign of Commodus wealthy and noble Romans and their families came over to the Church, and instances the martyr Apollonius, a man renowned for culture and philosophy, and who, judging from his *Acta*, may have been of senatorial rank. Can we believe that such a development was a sudden one, and that persons in state positions had never before joined the Christians? Tertullian claims that already in 197 there were Christians in great numbers of every class, conversions of people of high rank constantly taking place (*Apol.* i.), Christians everywhere in every conceivable position in life, municipal, military, court, senatorial, legal, with the single exception of any in the pagan religious system (*Apol.* xxxvii.). By the year 197 therefore, even after allowing something to the orator, the social obscurity of the Christians had vanished in Africa, and was probably fast disappearing in Rome also, for Tertullian could not exclude that city, with which, besides, he was perfectly familiar, and had written c. xxv. of his *Apologeticus* there (Roberts, *op. cit.* p. 32). Was this accession of importance confined to the short period of 180–197? On the contrary, it must have had its beginning at least as early as M. Aurelius.

There are four reasons why the idea of Christian social meanness impressed itself on the minds of the heathen. The Gospel inculcated the virtue of poverty and self-denial as a discipline of character; it asserted, as Justin teaches (1 *Apol.* lx.), that the power of God, and not human wisdom, had revealed the verities of religion, so that people who did not even know their alphabet had been enabled to apprehend them [1]; its appeal was universal, definitely including the poor, unhappy, and sinful; and finally, as Gibbon remarks (vol. i. c. xv.), in consequence of the latter, it would naturally appear that the greater number of Christians consisted of the lower ranks because society as a whole so consists. Consequently it is not so surprising that friend and foe alike have said so little of the steady Christian invasion of the upper ranks. We pass to what is relevant in the *Octavius* on the point. The heathen Caecilius describes the Christians as being 'uncultivated, unlettered, engaged in unskilled trades' (v. 4), 'the lowest of the low, ignorant, furtive, obscure, affecting to despise office, tatterdemalions' (viii. 4), toiling hard, with hunger as the only reward (xii. 2), boorish, rustic, with no conception of civic life (xii. 7). In reply Octavius remarks, as we should expect, that good sense depends upon neither rank nor fortune (xvi. 5), but when he comes to grips he states boldly that the refusal to accept office does not necessarily connote base degree (xxxi. 6), and as for poverty, 'while we are generally described as needy, that is no disgrace but something to be proud of, for as the soul is spoiled by too much plenty, so it is invigorated by frugality' (xxxvi. 3). It is to be observed that while it is not denied that the larger number of Christians is far from being affluent, yet the Christian carefully protects the class to which he belongs, the professional middle class, from ignominy, and uses also the significant phrase 'plerique pauperes dicimur.' Yet he does not stress the latter point, which would have been a strong reply to the heathen charge. It suggests itself to us, therefore, that while a certain number of Christians were in very comfortable circumstances, the very marked entry into the

[1] All the early apologists had urged this view.

official world, spoken of by Eusebius, in the reign of Commodus, and confirmed by Tertullian, had not yet manifested itself to the same extent. The internal testimony of the *Octavius* is, consequently, presumptively against Harnack's contention, and even if we had met with state officials in its pages professing Christianity, we should not be obliged to put the book after Commodus or after the *Apologeticus* of Tertullian. But although Harnack cites no passage in support of his argument, it is obvious that his chief premiss lies in the fact that two of the characters in the dialogue are lawyers who, after conversion to Christianity, still remained in full practice at the bar. Is this enough to conclude 'that Christianity had penetrated into the higher bureaucracy'? Hardly, since, after all, Minucius and his friend were not state functionaries but barristers. As such, and as Christians too, Tertullian is witness that they might have been in the Forum in 197; and, as far as we can see, there is nothing to deny the possibility of Christians following the same profession as early as M. Aurelius.

As an appendix to the foregoing it is possible to strengthen our conclusion from the impression obtained concerning the numerical strength of Christianity as it appears in the *Octavius*. In ix. 1 the heathen plainly exhibits fear of the rapid spread of the new religion, and the Christian (xxxi. 7) admits the daily increase in numbers, but he tactfully avoids any expression of gratification, contenting himself with the observation: 'we do not feel flattered about it. However numerous we might appear to ourselves, we are, of course, but a few in the sight of God' (xxxiii. 1). Contrast this with the boastfulness of Tertullian (*Apol.* xxxvii.), that the numerical strength of Christianity is more significant even than that of Rome's traditional enemies, that Christians are not merely found in one country but in all the world, in cities and villages alike, and occupying every conceivable position in the social and political life of the commonwealth, that the total muster of the Roman army is exceeded by that of the Christians in one province only, and finally, most amazing of all, that open rebellion is not at all necessary to bring

the government to its knees, since, were the Christians simply to withdraw themselves from the life of the Empire, the whole world would become desolate, silent, and dead. There is no such consciousness of essential Christian power in numbers, no such menacing hint of the disastrous consequences of passive resistance, to be found in the *Octavius*. In that book the Christians are seen in rapid growth, but they have not reached the point of triumph. It would appear, therefore, that the *Octavius* belongs to a generation earlier than that of the *Apologeticus*.

2. Passing to what seems to be the principal point with Harnack, as contained in his second argument, he says that the book was evidently written during a period of peace, when the days of persecution were far distant, and not merely during a pause. State and Church were virtually at peace, although isolated executions had occurred. Minucius does not, like Tertullian, hold forth on present-time persecution. This would point (*a*) to the great peace period between Caracalla and Maximinus Thrax (*i.e.* 211–235), or (*b*) the period between the latter and Decius (*i.e.* 235–249). Prior to this (*i.e.* A.D. 211) the apologists do not dare to write in the manner of the *Octavius*. What, then, is the manner in which Minucius writes, which has formed the basis for Harnack's conclusion that the Christians must have long enjoyed a substantial peace? In *Oct.* viii. 5 the Pagan says that the Christians make nothing of the dangers now pressing upon them, but are in terror of the possibilities of their condition in a future life, that is, of merely uncertain contingencies. 'Spernunt tormenta praesentia,' taken by itself might mean that persecution was in active operation, but it may be nothing more than a generally contrasting statement to 'incerta metuunt et futura' which follows, and the obvious repose in the circumstances of the dialogue does not point to a persecution in full swing. Yet the threat of violent proceedings still hung over the heads of the Christians: the axe lay ready to hand if the arm of the State elected to swing it aloft, for in xii. 4 the Pagan talks of tortures, crucifixions, burnings to come. The language is doubtless conventional and oratorical in the mouth of

one who is a very close friend of two Christians, but it has the force of warning for the future from what has occurred in the past. The Christian, in reply, does not deny that persecution is of no far distant memory. He has even assisted in the prosecutions himself before his conversion (xxviii. 3). Christians are, or have been, in prison for religious offences (xxxv. 6). Octavius glorifies the Christian martyr and confessor with the graphic power of an eye-witness. The Christian is before the tribunal asserting his liberty against 'kings and princes,' undismayed by tortures, the din of death, the executioner; he is the triumphant victor over the judge who condemns him. Numbers of Christians have been burned to death with never a groan from their lips. Lads and girls have scorned crucifixion and the wild beasts (xxxvii. 1, 4, 5). Against this, there is no desire for martyrdom, no fanaticism such as the actual hour of persecution calls forth, in the reply of Octavius to the menaces of his opponent. He says (xxix. 6): 'we do not worship crosses and we do not want them.' This is not the mental attitude of the willing martyrs of the North African persecution under Septimius Severus (Tert. *ad Scap.* i. 2). The text of the *Octavius* does not justify the inference that a persecution was going on at the time, but it is far from favourable to Harnack's assumption that the Church had enjoyed peace for a very long period. The horrors of persecution were within living memory, and meanwhile there was no guarantee of continued rest.

Monceaux and Massebieau before Harnack had already declared in favour of dating the *Octavius* in a long period of truce, and had maintained that this could only be from the last persecution of Caracalla in 213 to the first of Decius in 250, with a very short break under Maximinus Thrax in 235. Schultze, however, rejects this period in favour of that previous to the first edict of Diocletian, that is, we must understand, between the favourable edict of Gallienus in 261 and the fatal year 303. We shall see if any of these eras will suit the *Octavius*. V. Schultze's hypothesis [1] is interesting and at first sight attractive. The reference to volcanic

[1] *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.* 1881, pp. 485–506.

disturbances (*Oct.* xxxv. 3) provides, according to him, the year 203 as the *terminus a quo*, that being the date of the first eruption of Vesuvius after A.D. 79.[1] Now the *Octavius* was written in a time of peace. It was not the period between the cessation of the persecutions (begun under Sept. Severus in 202) upon the accession of Elegabalus (218) and the interruption by Maximinus Thrax (235), for four reasons: (*a*) There is a marked change of tone in the *Octavius* from that of the *Apol.* of Tertullian in respect of the charges brought against the Christians. In the latter it is assumed that they are universally made and credited, while in the former they are hypothetically and reservedly expressed, even with evident disbelief (*Oct.* ix. 3–5; x. 1). It would require considerably more than twenty or thirty years to bring this about.[2] (*b*) The cult of Serapis is described as that of the 'vulgus superstitiosus' (ii. 4). In the first half of the third century Serapis was worshipped in the highest circles. Alexander Severus (222–235) was initiated into his mysteries. The remark of Minucius would not suit this period.[3] (*c*) The *Octavius* points to a time when the Christians had greatly increased in numbers and when their self-consciousness was strengthened. (*d*) 'Sacraria' (ix. 1), that is, basilicas, not private houses, are mentioned as places of worship, which certainly points beyond the middle of the third century. Of these arguments (*c*) has already been negatived by an opposite result, and (*d*) will be taken in due course. The way is now open for Schultze to pass to the next peace period, that after Maximinus Thrax (235), and he leaps over all the rest of the third century and alights

[1] The first recorded eruption of Vesuvius was in A.D. 63, the second took place in 79, when Herculaneum and Pompeii were destroyed, and the third in 203, concerning which the only information is in Dion Cassius (*Hist. Rom.* lxxvi. 2). As Vesuvius was not quiescent between 79 and 203 (Dion Cassius, lxvi. 21), the latter date is valueless in connexion with Min. xxxv. 3. Moreover in 197 we have the parallel passage in Tert. *Apol.* xlviii.

[2] It might be answered that by the time of Tert. the charges had become definitely consolidated.

[3] A thorough investigation of the available history of the progress of the Alexandrine cult has convinced the author that Schultze's confidence in this argument is unfounded in fact.

in the opening of the fourth by an ingenious argument. He begins by finding what he considers to be a contemporary historical allusion. Minucius speaks of 'princes and kings, honoured not as great men, which is right enough, but foolishly and wickedly flattered as gods' (xxix. 5), 'kings and princes' against whom the Christian 'asserts his liberty' (xxxvii. 1). Who are these joint rulers? Not Aurelius and Verus, nor Aurelius and his son Commodus, because the above characterisation does not suit them. Neither, if these were the 'kings,' would it explain who were the 'princes.' The only solution must be that the 'kings' are the Augusti, Diocletian and Maximian, and that the 'princes' are the Caesars, Galerius and Constantine. In confirmation of this interpretation of *Oct.* xxix. 5, Aurelius Victor, *de Caesaribus*, xxxix., says that Diocletian was the first after Caligula and Domitian to allow himself to be adored and addressed as a god, and the panegyrist Claudius Mamertinus, in praising Maximian, joins the veneration of his divinity with the religion of the sacred city (*Paneg. Max.* i.). This degree of the cult of the Emperor shows a state of advanced development. The early cult, begun in the first century, seems to have been suppressed by Alexander Severus (222–235), according to Lampridius, who says (*Alex. Sev.* xviii.) 'he forbade adoration of himself.' Once again Minucius (xxxvii. 10) makes references which specially suit one person, and that Diocletian, when he animadverts on love of power and of the purple, combined with a sordid heart, and obliquely taunts him with low origin (cf. Lact. *de Mort.* vii. 10, 16; *Inst. Div.* v. 2). Therefore the *Octavius* must have been written after the elevation of Maximian to the rank of Augustus in 285, and the nomination of the Caesars in 292. As the persecution broke out on February 24, 303, the book must be dated between 292 and that time. But at what precise moment? Schultze answers by finding a further contemporary allusion in *Oct.* xxxvii. 1–3, which, he believes, obviously recalls recent deeds of violence against individual Christians. Those deeds were the Christian executions which succeeded the purification of the army in 299. Hence the *Octavius*

would seem to have been composed in the lull between 299 and February 24, 303, when the first edict was promulgated on the occasion of the Terminalia. Schultze concludes in these words: 'This period is already indicated by the frame of mind which shows itself in the *Octavius*. The writer has a dim presentiment of the bloody catastrophe which began in 303. The growing influence of the entourage of the head Emperor (Diocletian), which was hostile to the Christians generally, the bloody and rigorous measures taken against individual Christians, fill the author, on the one hand, with horror of the heathen supremacy, and, on the other, with anxious care for the future. . . . Before the decisive moment comes, he desires to set before his opponents the balance struck by him between Christianity and heathenism, and thereby, if possible, to avert the threatening disaster. But he seems to have little hope of success. Hence the tone of irritation, absent from other pre-Constantinian ecclesiastical writers. This destroys the assumption that the dialogue has a foundation in fact.' Unfortunately all this imposing edifice needs but one of two blows to shatter it. Firstly, the author of the *Quod idola* has furnished a *terminus ad quem* for the *Octavius*, which antedates the latter half a century before the Diocletian persecution. It is in vain that Schultze struggles against this objection by attempting to place the composition of the *Quod idola* in the first decade of the fourth century at earliest. And, secondly, if for the moment the literary witness of the middle third century is set aside, Lactantius in A.D. 305–310, in his *Divine Institutes*, speaks of Minucius not as a contemporary, but as a writer already old, as old, at the very least, as the middle of the previous century. Harnack mentions two possible periods, of which we will take first the one he regards as more probable, viz. from Maximinus Thrax to Decius. In the reign of the former the Christians suffered not as such but as included among the friends of Alexander Severus, so that the legal process described by Minucius (xxviii. 3) cannot apply to this. The years following under the Three Gordians (238–244) and Philip the Arabian (244–249) saw such a favourable

attitude on the part of the government that Eusebius has a tradition, probably incorrect but significant, that Philip was a Christian (*H.E.* vi. 34). During a peace period of this character how can we account for the allusions in the *Octavius* to a not remote persecution? It is true that a terrific storm was suddenly to break out in 250 under Decius when a definite and understanding effort was inaugurated by imperial proclamation for the purpose of completely eradicating Christianity. But by this time the Pagans no longer heeded the idle and foolish slanders which had been invented and believed under M. Aurelius, and which appear so vividly in the *Octavius*. The government knew perfectly well that the Christians were as innocent of secret crimes as any of the imperial subjects, but they had an independent organisation, the Church, within the Empire, and at this, as an organisation, the Pagan power struck. Therefore, although future sufferings are promised the Christians by the heathen speaker in the *Octavius*, as they are to be inflicted upon the score of concealed abominations, this cannot be a prophecy of the Decian persecution in 250. Notwithstanding, there has been attempted a definite fixture of the date of the book for the year 248 (or 247), or immediately before, when Minucius was presumably inspired to write on the occasion of the fifth celebration of the secular games in commemoration of the thousandth anniversary of the foundation of Rome, held with great splendour by Philip the Arabian. But there is nothing in Minucius to show that imperial celebrations were contemplated, and why, indeed, should they move him to compose a Christian dialogue? For these, and the other reasons above, K. J. Neumann's suggestion[1] must be rejected. The other peaceful era which would, according to Harnack, suit the circumstances of the *Octavius*, is that between Caracalla and Maximinus Thrax. The intermittent persecution which broke out in 202 (or 203) under Septimius Severus in Egypt and North Africa seems not to have died down until 213, in the third year of Caracalla. Excluding the remaining

[1] *Theolog. Literaturzeitung*, vi. 422; *Der röm. Staat und die allgemeine Kirche*, i. 1890.

four years of his reign and the two years of Macrinus, the period of rest for the Church under consideration is that of the Syrian Emperors, Elegabalus (218–222) and his cousin Alexander Severus (222–235), the former far from being an enemy, and the latter a pious eclectic, whose mother had conversed with Christians, including Origen. If it is conceived that the *Octavius* was written in the reign of Elegabalus, so that the memories of persecution referred to are those of 202–213, then how are we to account for the attitude of the Pagan speaker, a patriotic upholder of the ancient religion of Rome, in attacking Christianity as its worst enemy, and not rather the cult of Baalpeor, the Sun-god of Emesa, who had been forced upon the Roman people, had insulted the Palladium, and whose lascivious and disgusting rites filled the city? But if he could be silent, certainly, on the other hand, the Christian could not have failed to arraign the heathen with the excesses of Baal and Astarte, as well as with the absurdities of Isis and Osiris. Still less would the Pagan be likely to resuscitate the Frontonian invective against the Christians at a later time, under Alex. Severus, when the softening processes of religious eclecticism were at work, when Christian bishops appeared at court, when the Emperor awarded land to Christians against the company of victuallers, and the image of Christ stood with others in the palace chapel. Thus we are led to look to a time anterior to the decree of Sept. Severus against the Christians, a period of relative peace whose *terminus a quo* can hardly be earlier than the accession of Antoninus Pius, that is, the era A.D. 138–202. The speech of Fronto, as we have said, was probably in the reign of the latter (138–161), possibly as early as 140. Will the circumstances of the *Octavius* fit any time in this period? The Christians are not, either at the moment of the debate or that of the publication of the book, being actively persecuted, but they have witnessed prosecutions and perhaps martyrdoms. Can this have been during the fierce persecution which broke out between 166 and 177 under M. Aurelius? For the first time the proceedings were systematic, and probably new decrees were issued for dis-

covering and apprehending Christians in 176. Disastrous floods at Rome, followed by conditions similar to the Great Plague of London, after the return of Verus from Parthia with his infected army in 166, labour troubles in the Egyptian cornfields, incursions of the Moors into Spain, and finally the menace of a vast Germanic confederacy along all the northern frontiers of the Empire, received a plausible explanation when it was said that the gods were angry because of the impiety of the 'atheists,' that is, of the Christians. Doubtless the Emperor judged the Christians to be a moral or a political evil, or both. Among those who were executed were Justin M. at Rome, probably the widow Felicitas and her seven sons also at Rome, Pothinus, the venerable bishop of Lyons, and many others at Lyons and Vienne, probably Carpus, Papylus, and Agathonice at Pergamum, others at Ephesus; and a large number of confessors were sent to the Sardinian mines. Perhaps in Africa alone the peace of the Christians was undisturbed, which can be the only explanation why Tertullian (*Apol.* v.) imagines that M. Aurelius was a protector of the Christians, and why he was altogether misled by that Emperor's supposed letter about the Thundering Legion. If, as Keim thinks, the circumstances in the *Octavius* point to the Aurelian storm, we are brought into the reign of Commodus (180–192), and beyond his conjectural date, 180. Under the monster Commodus, says Eusebius (*H.E.* v. 21), 'there was peace, by the grace of God, prevailing in the churches throughout the whole world,' but this is true only for the second half of his unspeakable life as Emperor. By 180 the persecution had reached Africa, for on July 17 of that year perished the martyrs of Scili. At Rome Apollonius was executed (180–185). A vigorous persecution was conducted in Asia Minor by Arrius Antoninus the proconsul in 185. By the episcopate of Pope Victor (189–198/9), however, a rest came to the Church by the intervention of Marcia, the favourite of Commodus, and the Christian prisoners were released from the Sardinian mines. Therefore from 189 until 202 there remained a period of peace until, in the latter year, a short and sharp

persecution broke out under Septimius Severus, which, however, seems to have been confined to Africa. It remains then to consider if the *Octavius* could have been written between 189 and 202, either a little before or after or actually contemporaneous with the *Apologeticus* of Tertullian. At once we must admit the improbability of the two apologies being nearly contemporaneous, having regard to the intimacy of their mutual relationship. It is not impossible, of course, but we should have to believe that the publication of the one work was followed almost immediately by the appearance of a plagiarism obvious to the whole Latin-Christian community. But there is ground stronger than an *a priori* presumption for rejecting this period. The Christian in *Oct.* xviii. 6 asks: 'When has a partnership in the throne' ('regni societas') 'ever been assumed in good faith, or dissolved without bloodshed?' Octavius is in the course of proving the Unity of God from the analogy of the only practicable form of earthly kingdoms, that which consists in a monarchy. Well-known instances of disastrous experiments in dual government are given, concluding with the fatal rivalry of Pompey and Caesar in an empire which, great as it was, could not provide room for two such ambitious men. His question in the climax is perhaps inspired by the saying of Ennius preserved in Cicero (*de Off.* I. viii. 26), 'nulla sancta societas nec fides regni est,' who again seems to have derived the sentiment from the dictum of Homer (*Iliad* ii. 204) on the evil of multiple rule and the necessity of monarchy. Doubtless Minucius is repeating a commonplace of political philosophy which occurs again and again.[1] As, however, he makes it a prominent part of his argument in the most serious of all questions, it is inconceivable that he only meant to repeat an old saw for the sake of effect, caring nothing for historical inaptness and its consequences. Minucius well knew one of two things: either that there was up to his time no well-known instance of a successful dual

[1] Livy, I. xiv. 3; Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 7; Nepos, *Dion.* vi. 4; Seneca, *Thyest.* 444; Lucan, *Phars.* i. 111; Florus, II. xiii. 14; Juvenal, x. 148 and 168–169. See also H. Dessau, *Hermes*, xl. (1905), p. 381, and C. Synnerberg, *Randbem. zu M. F.* II. Helsingfors, 1903, pp. 17, 18.

rule, or that there had been a case recently, begun in perfidy and ended in blood, to which he deliberately refers. Taking the latter, it was Keim who suggested that xviii. 6, with other passages, alludes to the joint rule of M. Aurelius and Commodus, and expresses a hope in their fall, but this is manifestly inconsistent with the terms of xviii. 6, and Massebieau (p. 342) has more reason when he thinks that the passage may recall the tragic association of Caracalla and his brother Geta. If this, indeed, were so, we should have to believe that the amicable association of M. Aurelius and L. Verus had, in less than a lifetime, already been completely forgotten. The condominium of these two Emperors, in which both bore the title Augustus, began in 161 and ended in 169 by the sudden death of Verus at Altinum in the country of the Veneti, while both the Emperors were on their way to begin a second campaign against the northern nations, the best known of which were the Marcomanni and the Quadi, who were a constant source of trouble at this period. M. Aurelius at once hurried back to Rome and supported the Senate in decreeing apotheosis to his colleague. Doubtless he was well aware of the dissolute character of his son-in-law, and perfectly conscious that he himself, who had conducted operations from Rome, was really responsible for the magnificent success of the Roman arms under Verus in the Parthian campaign of 162–165. Certainly, too, he must have been keenly disappointed when Verus in 167 insisted upon returning to Rome on the occasion of the first campaign against the Marcomanni. But the association of the two had begun in good faith, and if it ended with tragic suddenness, there can be no reason to doubt that the cause of the death of Verus was other than an apoplectic seizure, as was reported, his licentious life being what it had been. Dion Cassius (*Epitome of Roman History*, lxxi. 2), the contemporary of Tertullian, is the only one to suggest otherwise, and only as said, not as fact which he believed, that Verus had conspired against Marcus, but before he could do anything, had died of poison. This can be dismissed as mere malicious gossip. The two Emperors had always worked together

most loyally. Truly Verus always paid the compliment to Aurelius due from vice to virtue, not of hypocrisy but that of deference, which did not at all dissolve the partnership, but ensured its success. Consequently, for Minucius to speak as he does in xviii. 6, he must have been entirely ignorant of such an important contradiction in fact, which would belong to a posterior time. The *Octavius* would then have been written before the condominium of 161. If this conclusion is right, it clears another and very attractive allusion completely out of the way, viz. that to the Parthian campaign, which, because some are convinced by it, may properly be examined now. The heathen Caecilius (*Oct.* vii. 4) is endeavouring to establish the divine inspiration of the auspices from the tragic results of neglect of them, for example, at the battle of the Allia, in the two naval disasters during the first Punic war, in the defeat of the Romans by Hannibal at Lake Trasimenus, and finally in the overthrow of Crassus by the Parthians at Carrhae (53 B.C.), ' ut Parthos signa repetamus,' ' with the consequence that we are still engaged in recovering our standards from the Parthians.' Here, again, Minucius follows Cicero, who is fond of repeating the instances of the first Punic war and of Lake Trasimenus in the same connexion (*de Div.* i. 35 ; ii. 8 ; *de N.D.* ii. 3, 7), and refers to the case of Crassus also (*de Div.* i. 16), but Minucius adds what appears to be a topical allusion, ' the Parthian question is only now in course of settlement.' If this is his meaning, when would it be ? The standards lost by Crassus were returned to Augustus in 20 B.C., along with the prisoners, by Phraates IV., King of Parthia, not as a result of military operations, but diplomatically, the Roman action in which would be suitably expressed by the juridical use of ' repetere,' an event of great moment to the Roman mind, sung by Horace and Virgil. But Parthia still remained unconquered, and in A.D. 161 Vologeses III. cut up a whole Roman army in Armenia and killed its commander Severianus. This disaster demanded an expedition of revenge under the co-emperor L. Verus, which was crowned with success through the generalship of the ambitious Avidius Cassius

in 162–3, although operations were not finished until 165. Turning to *Oct.* vii. 4 we read that Crassus 'mocked at and deserved to suffer the curses of the Furies,' that is, the past tense 'meruit et inrisit,' and this is unexpectedly followed by the present subjunctive 'ut . . . repetamus.' Bährens and others believe that the use of the present tense is required by a contemporary fact, that is, a campaign going on against the Parthians for the recovery of the standards lost by Severianus in 161. The defeat has not yet been avenged, but it is in process of being avenged. Therefore, the date of the *Octavius* is between 161 and 162–3.[1] According to this, the heathen speaker considers that the disaster of 161 was only part of the primary misfortune at Carrhae. The standards were lost by Crassus first and by Severianus afterwards, all through the fault of Crassus. He is ignoring the return of the standards in 20 B.C. because, the old score against the Parthians still remains to be paid. In opposition to this, there are many who, like Monceaux, hold that the allusion about the Parthians is not to a specific campaign but is general and vague. According to this, the sentiment of vii. 4 would be: 'Crassus despised the auspices, with the result that the Parthian question is yet unsettled.' To get over the difficulty of a present tense following a past, C. Halm in his edition of 1867 boldly emended the text by substituting 'repeteremus,' thus reading 'we had to recover our standards,' that is, in the reign of Augustus. Probably 'reposceremus' would have pleased him better, as it would have regularised the use of the double accusative which made Halm so suspicious.[2] The emendation is not followed in the latest editions, but the translators take 'repetamus' to be equivalent to 'repeteremus,' for the following reason. Minucius, like Cicero and other oratorical writers, observes the strict rules of metrical prose derived from the Greek sophists, in the interior rhythm of the

[1] F. Ramorino in *Didaskaleion*, i. p. 136, Turin, 1912, conjectures an allusion in *Oct.* vii. 4 to a later expedition, that of Alexander Severus in 233. Monceaux says that both Trajan before, and Sept. Severus after Verus, defeated the Parthians more severely.

[2] Virgil, *Aen.* vii. 606, writes 'Parthosque reposcere signa.' Minucius is fond of the double accusative in a non-classical use.

sentence, but most noticeably in the termination by a metrical clause. It has been shown by A. Ausserer (*De Clausulis Minucianis*, 1906) that Minucius employs four species of clausulae in various forms, of which the first, a cretic with a trochee or spondee, is the most favoured, occurring 322 times. ' Signa repetamus ' is one of these, a cretic and a trochee, of which particular form H. Bornecque found 38 examples.[1] Like ' regna meruerunt ' (vi. 3) and ' nota simulacra ' (x. 2), ' signa repetamus ' is one of these. Minucius, some maintain, in order to get his favourite clausula, did not hesitate to change the tense from imperfect to present. He often allowed his syntax and style to be influenced by a preference for a clausula.[2] There is an analogous case in which Minucius undoubtedly altered the tense for the sake of the same terminating clausula, a cretic and a trochee. In a context of graphic presents he suddenly obtrudes a past tense in xxv. 4 : ' Neptune puts up walls for Laomedon, but the unfortunate builder got no pay for his labour ' (clausula : ' structor accepit '). The conclusion must be, that nothing decisive can be obtained from ' repetamus ' in vii. 4. By process of exhaustion there is now left only the reign of Antoninus Pius for the period of the *Octavius*. Mild and humane as that emperor was, the position of Christianity was still where it had been left by the rescript of Trajan to Pliny in 112, that is, in that of a ' religio illicita,' illegal by express declaration, so that prosecutions and executions could occur and did take place, as in the case of Polycarp at Smyrna, *c.* 155. Yet Tatian in his *Address to the Greeks*, which may be as early as this, does not speak of present persecution. There was not, in fact, any formal persecution at all, but only a liability to punishment at this time, until M. Aurelius brought about a radical change in the situation by special action for the moment. The rescript of Antoninus in favour of the Christians is spurious, and as his reign is almost a blank in history, there is nothing to prevent the assumption that

[1] See *Le Musée Belge*, 1903, pp. 247–265.

[2] Examples are given by J. P. Waltzing in pt. 2, p. 139, of his *Oct. de Min. Fel.* 1909.

sporadic and intermittent attacks were made upon individual Christians, and that such cases came before the Roman courts. There was an anomalous state of affairs for the Church, in which she enjoyed an uncertain peace, in which one might expect to find contradictions, such as a Christian advocate in full practice at the bar, who remembered Christians in trouble, and who may reasonably expect to see them before the courts again. In the meantime there exists relative peace. Such are the circumstances of the *Octavius*. Therefore the book may well have been written before the accession of M. Aurelius and L. Verus in 161, at latest in 160, the debate having been twelve years earlier in 148, shortly after the speech of Fronto against the Christians.

3. Thirdly, with reference to martyrdom, Harnack does not find in the *Octavius* the grave and dignified language of Tertullian and of his contemporaries, as well Eastern as Western, but, instead, the arrogant and theatrical diction of Cyprian, and of the men of his time. He compares *Oct.* xxxvii. 1 with, for example, the letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne, and with Tertullian's writings, and, on the other hand, with Cyprian's correspondence. In the latter the language is exactly the same. The way in which the martyrs are made to speak and are encouraged and praised in the *Octavius* does not belong to the second century, but to a time when they had become great Church dignitaries and almost intolerable (Massebieau, p. 344). Harnack's case here depends upon the result of comparisons with the short passage of Minucius on the martyrs. Let us first take the Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne. Here Massebieau sees a great difference between the martyrs of Lyons and those put forward by Minucius, the former silent or with rarely a severe word before the judges, the latter haughty, provocative, railing, and insulting to the judge who pronounces sentence, as was customary in the third century, when the martyr was exalted to a high rank in the Church and had become a source of trouble to the bishops (pp. 343, 344). There are, however, few points of similarity between the Letter of Lyons and the *Octavius*,

wherein they are justly comparable. The Lyons letter is a personal document *sui generis*, and furnishes, in its simple and direct pathos, a striking contrast to the oratorical abstractions of the *Octavius*. On the one hand we have a moving account of actual fact, and on the other a piece of carefully written prose, in which art and not emotion has the first place. We therefore pass to what are really comparable, the allusions to martyrdom in Tertullian. When Harnack speaks of his gravity and dignity on the subject, he is doubtless thinking of *Apol.* l., where we read of the sufferings of the Christian soldier, of his battle for the truth before the tribunals, and of his triumph in his cause when slain. The faggots which are piled around a Christian at burnings are a robe of victory for him, and the axle-stock to which he is bound is his triumphal chariot. But Tertullian has not elsewhere exhibited the same restraint. In his *ad Martyres* [1] (3) he exhorts the martyrs to regard themselves as Christian athletes: 'you are like to engage in a grand contest, having the living God for your superintendent (*agonothetes Deus vivus*), and the Holy Ghost as your trainer (*xystarches Spiritus Sanctus*), in which the prize is of angelic essence, a crown of eternity, citizenship of heaven, glory for ever and ever. Your master Jesus Christ (*epistates vester Christus Iesus*), who has anointed you with the Spirit, and has led you into the arena, has thought fit to exchange your easier state for a lot that is hard, to this very end that you may put on strength ere the day of trial.' Elsewhere, in contexts of high-flown extravagance, Tertullian boasts of the *vera libertas* of the Christian, of glorying in the palms of martyrdom (*de Spectaculis*, xxix.), and asserts that God has appointed martyrdoms as contests, in which He has brought out a particular skill and rules of His own, in order to provide a spectacle for the world of men and of angels, wherein flesh and spirit may be tested in constancy and endurance (*Scorpiace*, vi.). We see that Tertullian has travelled further than *Oct.* xxxvii., where Minucius does not affirm that God has imposed martyrdom, but only that He is

[1] c. vi. fixes the date, A.D. 197.

pleased to behold faithfulness unto death. Side by side with the pomposity of Tertullian the short passage of Minucius on the martyrs appears sobriety itself. As for the arrogant and theatrical language of Cyprian, which is supposed to be found in Minucius, one cannot say that he is less restrained than Tertullian, or that the orator more frequently displaces the sober Christian. In fact the comparison of Min. xxxvii. should properly be made with one of his favourite heathen models, with Seneca, from whom the thought, form, and language are borrowed and imitated, as we have previously seen in chapter IV. above (Seneca, *de Prov.* ii. 7–9). What Harnack considers to be so arrogant and theatrical belongs not to Minucius but to the Stoic, whose 'vir fortis' so gloriously matches Fate and even invites the conflict. Therefore when Massebieau (n. p. 344) conjectures that it is not impossible that the confessors of the *Octavius*, who so hotly maintained their liberty before the Emperor, were domestics of the household of Alexander Severus (Eus. *H.E.* vi. 28), dragged before the tribunal of Maximinus Thrax, and replying to the barbarian with the scorn which all the world soon showed towards him, he is quite beside the mark. There is no need to imagine that in the *Octavius* we are face to face with the martyrs of the third century, and there is nothing to forbid the language of Seneca being applied to them a hundred years earlier.

4. The substance of Harnack's fourth argument amounts to this. Minucius overflows with contempt, sarcasm, and hatred towards the Roman Empire and the Caesars (cc. xxi. xxv. xxxvii; cf. Massebieau, p. 341 f.). He treats Rome and her traditions in the manner of a barbarian. That he was an African, as some aver, does not explain the way in which he speaks, and, in fact, he was probably a Latin. Three considerations will show that Minucius could only have belonged to a later period. (*a*) Comparison with Tertullian. Tertullian, in spite of all his attacks on the Emperor and the Empire, maintains, at the bottom, a deep respect for them. In his day the memory of the proud line from Trajan to M. Aurelius was not yet extinct, and

Septimius Severus, the 'constantissimus princeps,' showed what a ruler ought to be. (*b*) The profession of Minucius. Minucius was a Roman jurist and could not have spoken as he does at the period of the great jurists in the time of M. Aurelius. (*c*) The social position of Minucius. He did not belong to the slave or freedman class, some Christian member of which of Oriental origin, who had migrated to Rome, might have expressed himself, during the first two centuries, in the same disrespectful terms. The place of Minucius was, on the contrary, in the high Roman literary circle which was devoted to Cicero, Seneca, and Gaius. Therefore he could only speak as he does when the Emperors had become neglectful, when the Empire was crumbling internally, and it was plain that the final catastrophe was creeping on. In reply, it will only be necessary to take the first point, which alone offers tangible grounds. Harnack is following Massebieau, who more fully develops the argument (pp. 341–343). Here it is in brief. Tertullian testifies to the prosperity, good government, and civilisation existing throughout the Empire in the reign of Sept. Severus (*de Anima*, xxx.), and to the blessings of peace and plenty raining from heaven (*de Pallio*, i.). The Christians pray for the Emperor and for the duration of the Empire, Tertullian says, and he speaks of the Emperor with deep respect (*Apol.* xxxi.–xxxiv.). Minucius, on the other hand, treats the Empire with indifference or with disdain and hate. When he refers to the Emperors he jests at their apotheoses, or brands them with corruption, or points out the dangers they are in with scornful satisfaction. He has therefore ceased to be a Roman at heart, as may be seen from his account of the origins of the Empire and the causes of its greatness (*Oct.* xxv.), and from his remarks on the apotheoses of the Emperors (*Oct.* xxi. ; cf. *ad Nat.* i. 17), and on the Emperors themselves (*Oct.* xxxvii.). For him to have hoped to recommend Christianity to heathen readers in conjunction with such political views, patriotism must, in his day, have reached a very low ebb, which points to a time subsequent to Sept. Severus, when the world was being detached from the Empire and the Emperors by two

things, the syncretism of civilisations,[1] and the disorder and ruin which gradually succeeded security and riches. The suitable moment for the composition of the *Octavius* would be in the short reign of Maximinus Thrax, when there was already a long list of tragic deaths of the Emperors, and the infamies of Caracalla and Elegabalus were still fresh in mind. Thus far Massebieau. It remains to see whether the comparison with Tertullian justifies these conclusions. Minucius in c. xxi. explains the genesis of the heathen pantheon by the Euhemeristic hypothesis, that is by the apotheosis of illustrious men. The harshest remark is that Romulus received his apotheosis as the result of perjury. What he says can only be applied indirectly to the apotheoses of the later Emperors, viz. that kings would much rather live on as men than die to become gods. Tertullian (*ad Nat.* ii. 9) asserts that Romulus enjoyed a posthumous deification because he built a city, and asks why not also other city-builders, including women? In *ad Nat.* i. 17 he writes: 'We do not call the Emperor a god. In fact, about this we "pull faces," as the common saying goes. But really, you people who call Caesar a god, in effect make a jest of him by calling him what he is not, and put a curse on him too, because he does not want to be what you call him at all. He would much rather prefer to be alive than to be made a god.' There can be no doubt that Tertullian is the more direct and full, and the more scandalous on the apotheoses of the Emperors. Turning to the *Apologeticus*, in c. xxi. Tertullian does not believe that the Emperors could become Christians, but that they are, notwithstanding, necessary to the age, thus showing that he thought Christianity and the Empire to be hopelessly incompatible. Furthermore, if he has somewhere in his mind a deep respect for the Emperors, he does not very warmly display it when he has an opportunity. He informs us that the Christians are loyal to Caesar because he could not be Caesar except by Divine appointment (xxxiii.), a

[1] Referred to expressly, according to Massebieau, in *Oct.* xx. 6, where it is said that national heroes were revered as national gods before the rites and customs of the various races had become intermingled.

reason which would suit any and every established form of government, doubtless sound in practice, but with more resignation than enthusiasm in its motive. The Christians pray for the Emperor and the Empire (xxx.) as a religious duty (xxxi.), but the paramount reason for this course is the rather peculiar one that the advent of Antichrist and ensuing horrors are being delayed by the continuance granted to the Roman Empire (xxxii.). One may be excused a certain scepticism of the depth of Tertullian's loyalty, especially if account is also taken of the implacable hate of the persecutors which darkens almost every page of his writings (cf. esp. *ad Scapulam*). Minucius (xxv.) details the disgraces and crimes by which Rome climbed to greatness, and convicts the Romans of systematic sacrilege: 'all the territory, therefore, that the Romans now occupy, inhabit, possess, is the proceeds of barefaced robbery; all their temples have been built out of the sale of loot, in other words, out of the devastation of towns, the spoil of gods, the slaughter of priests. To adopt the religion of the conquered, to adore the gods whom your victories have made your captives, is to add derision to insult. Surely it is hallowing sacrilege to worship what you have taken by main force, and not the consecration of divinities. And so the Roman triumphs always meant acts of impiety, and there have been as many robberies of the gods as trophies won from nations. To sum up, the Romans have achieved such greatness not by piety at all, but simply because they have gone scot-free of sacrilege.' Tertullian (*ad Nat.* ii. 17) does not abate one jot of this invective against Rome, but sharpens it with an admixture of rationalism: 'How can it appear that the Romans got the Empire by reason of the highest piety and the most profound respect for the gods, when that Empire was extended rather by the harm inflicted on the gods? Unless I am wrong, it is so with every kingdom or empire: it is gained by war and enlarged by war. Doubtless a town's gods are injured by the conquerors. City walls and temples are involved in the same ruin, priests and citizens are butchered alike, profane and sacred things are plundered just the same. The Romans are guilty of

as many sacrileges as they have won trophies, and they have triumphed over the gods as often as they have over nations.' The same passage is repeated in *Apol.* xxv. towards the close of a lengthy refutation of the claim that Rome owed her greatness to her religious zeal, in which the lash cuts much more deeply than that of Minucius in the parallel chapter of the *Octavius* (xxv.). The last comparison concerns the Christian attitude towards public celebrations and amusements. Minucius (xxxvii.) explains that the Christians keep away from the public processions because of their heathen associations, and likewise shun the brawling games, the murderous gladiatorial shows, and the vicious stage. Tertullian has written a whole book (*de Spectaculis*) on this subject, but in the short passage in the *Apol.* (xxxviii.) he manages to impart a political offensiveness quite foreign to the *Octavius*, saying that the Christians have no desire for public life, that they recognise one universal republic, the world, they abstain from the superstitious Pagan shows, they have nothing in common with the madness of the circus, the immodesty of the theatre, the atrocity of the arena, or the vain-glory of the public promenade. The conclusion of these comparisons is that the criticisms of Harnack are not justified. He is too severe upon Minucius and too lenient with Tertullian. The latter says all that the former does about Rome, her history, her Emperors, and her life, often in identical terms, and in no whit softened. We utterly fail to see in him any deep respect for the Emperor and the Empire or any respect at all. The political outlook of both is so similar, that it is impossible to use this as a criterion of time. As for the creeping catastrophe of the Empire of which Minucius was, according to Harnack, fully aware, he does not make his Pagan interlocutor speak as if he had any consciousness of it. On the contrary Caecilius is full of the pride and glory of old Rome, and he flings the question in triumph at his Christian adversary: 'Do not the Romans, without any help from your God, govern, rule, enjoy the whole world, and lord it over you also?' This certainly does not look as though the Empire were crumbling. On this head,

therefore, the arguments of Harnack and Massebieau fall to the ground.

5. In the fifth place Harnack argues on philological grounds. The language used by Minucius, he says, is not the Latin of Apuleius, of Tertullian, and of the jurists about A.D. 200. He does not belong to the school of Fronto and Gellius. He does not attempt to imitate Ennius or Plautus, but imitates Virgil and Cicero. His language is that which we meet with in Novatian and Cyprian. Minucius went to the same rhetorical schools of the first half of the third century, through which these had passed (Massebieau, p. 340 f.). Further, in a note (p. 329), Harnack adds that if we look at Hartel's table (*Patrist. Studien*, ii. p. 18 f.) we shall soon see that Minucius polished up the vulgar expressions of Tertullian (in the *ad Nat.*), *e.g.* Tert. ' retro non fuisse,' Min. ' ante non fuerit ' ; Tert. ' citius peierare,' Min. ' tutius peierare ' ; Tert. ' cantherios,' Min. ' asinos ' ; Tert. ' passivitate,' Min. ' passim.' Harnack's note may be disposed of at once. He has himself pointed out the futility of comparisons between Minucius and Tertullian. Without accepting the assertion in totality, it certainly does apply to the present instance. One could as well say that Tertullian substituted vulgarisms for the choice Latin of Minucius. Harnack supplies no details in support of his philological contention about Cyprianic language, and for these it is necessary to turn to Massebieau (pp. 340–341), who writes, in substance, to the following effect. There was action and reaction in the literary style of Latin writers of the first three centuries. The freedom of thought wedded to a classical form in the first century was ousted by erudition and archaism in the second, by a style imitative of Ennius and Plautus, to which school Fronto, Apuleius, Aulus Gellius, and Tertullian belong. The third century brought in a return to the clear classical models of Cicero and Virgil. This movement continued to the fourth century, when Lactantius is a Ciceronian and later on Sulpicius Severus imitates Sallust. Cyprian, as an African, at first preserves the affectation made fashionable by Fronto, but he speaks a language singularly clearer than Tertullian. Elegant but

with some trace of archaism, Minucius belongs to the same transition period through which Cyprian is passing in his affected introduction to the *ad Donatum*, joined with its reminiscences of classical authors. He is to be ranked with Novatian and Cyprian as one who took Tertullian for a beloved master notwithstanding his obscurity. The proof of what Massebieau contends cannot stand upon generalisations such as these, but only upon detailed philological comparisons, and an attempt has been made to supply it by F. di Capua in an elaborate technical article on the evolution of metrical Latin prose during the first three Christian centuries and its bearing on the date of Minucius.[1] We may call it the metrical clause argument.[2]

Three periods are distinguished by di Capua in the evolution of metrical Latin prose: (1) including the first and second centuries down to Tertullian, (2) extending from Minucius to Augustine, and (3) including Augustine down to the disappearance of all rhythm in the seventh century. He has arrived at this result by applying the test of the 'compositio numerosa' to the principal Latin writers, with especial attention to those of the first two groups, which consists in comparing the frequency of the various forms of 'clausulae,' that is of the harmonious cadences at the end of a member or period, the choice of the most harmonious among them, and the prevalence of certain types of caesura, and of trisyllables or tetrasyllables at the end. The first group, composed of such writers of the first two centuries as Valerius Maximus, Velleius Paterculus, Suetonius, Seneca, Petronius, Quintilian, Pliny, Fronto, Apuleius, and Tertullian, is characterised by a great variety of 'clausulae' and a less monotonous rhythm. These writers are freer in the use of different forms of metrical clauses and types

[1] *Didaskaleion*, 1913, pp. 1–41.

[2] The other authorities on metrical prose are (*a*) the metrical clauses in Min.: H. Bornecque in *Musée Belge*, 1903, pp. 247–265; A. Ausserer, *De Clausulis Minucianis*, 1906; (*b*) more generally, E. Norden, *De Minucii Aetate et Genere Dicendi*, 1897; *Die antike Kunstprosa*, ii. pp. 909–960, 1898; *Rhyth. Prosa in d. altchrist. lat. Lit.* 1905; T. Zielinski, *Das Klauselgesetz in Ciceros Reden*, 1904; an art. on study of metrical clauses in *Hermes*, lviii. 1903.

of caesura than Cicero on the one hand, and the prose authors of the third and fourth centuries on the other. Certain endings are indeed prevalent, but this group does not disdain the use of others less sonorous. Their obvious aim is to avoid monotony and to seek variety, even at the expense of harmony. Passing to the second group, which includes such writers of the third and fourth centuries as Minucius Felix, Novatian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Ausonius, Symmachus, and Augustine, there is apparent an immense difference. This group is distinguished by the use of only a few ' clausulae ' and the almost total exclusion of any others. Types of ' clausulae ' which the first group approves or tolerates the second disapproves and rejects. At the end of the second century and the beginning of the third a reaction took place against the archaising of Fronto and his followers. Precise, uniform, and rigid scholastic teaching succeeded the freedom of good taste. It became obligatory to use the more harmonious ' clausulae,' which the great Latin writers from Cicero onwards had preferred to use and would not abuse. The ' compositio numerosa ' of this period is distinguished by six characteristics : (1) the elimination of the less sonorous types of ' clausulae,' especially the double spondee, the double trochee, and the form seen in, *e.g.*, the combination ' spiritum pertimescerem,' (2) the prevalence of a few others because more harmonious, (3) the prevalence of a few types of caesura, (4) the prevalence of words of three or four syllables at the end of periods, (5) the almost total elimination of words of five syllables or more, (6) and of monosyllables and dissyllables. Thus the beautiful variety of ' clausulae ' which had reigned during the first two centuries now disappears, but not without a struggle during all that time. But in the third century the rhetoricians prevailed over good sense, and all Latin writers, great and small, agree to terminate their periods only with those few ' clausulae,' the effect of which they had heard so frequently extolled by their teachers, and a desolating monotony results. This rigorous direction extends as far as Augustine at the end of the fourth century, and in the fifth, beginning with Augustine, accent commences to

supersede quantity in certain endings, and the movement subsides in the disappearance of all rhythm in the seventh. Now comes the bearing upon the date of the *Octavius*. F. di Capua says that, after making a systematic comparison of the practice of prose rhythm of Minucius and Tertullian with all the other Latin writers, both Pagan and Christian, of the first three centuries, and with the precepts of Latin grammarians and rhetoricians, he believes that he has found an unexpected confirmation of Harnack's fifth argument. The prose rhythm of the *Apologeticus* of Tertullian has an intimate connexion with that of the authors of the first and second centuries, while that of Minucius follows a different direction and is exactly what prevails in Cyprian, Novatian, and Arnobius. Minucius, says di Capua, is the first representative of a long series of writers throughout the third and fourth centuries who attend to the cadence of members and periods with a scrupulousness unknown to the earlier authors, and the examination has furnished undoubted proofs that he certainly obeys the precepts of the rhetorical schools of the beginning of the third century. F. di Capua is thus enabled to put forward a fresh plea in favour of the priority of Tertullian. It is inconceivable that he should have gone over the work of Minucius, pulling to pieces rhythmically perfect expressions, and expressing the thought in less harmonious Latin, and it is absurd to say that he substituted for the good 'clausulae' of Minucius extremely bad ones of his own. In conclusion, di Capua maintains that the rhythmic prose of Minucius is clearly detached from that of Fronto, Apuleius, and Tertullian. To put the *Octavius* between 160 and 180, and therefore to put back the rhetorical education of Minucius to 140–150, would be to do violence to all the certain results which the above rhythmical analysis furnishes. 'In the future history of metrical prose it will be necessary to put Minucius between Tertullian and Cyprian, and nearer the second than the first. In any other place he or the *Octavius* would appear to be an isolated and inexplicable phenomenon.'

In reply it must be admitted that di Capua has approached the problem of the date of Minucius in a scientific

manner, but unless his classifications are confirmed by the most complete researches of independent philologists they must remain no more than personal impressions. As for the inconceivability of Tertullian appropriating Minucian material and converting it into his own style, we find the same thing done over and over again in the literature of all ages. The taste of a later generation cannot endure the thoughts of an earlier one clothed in an old-fashioned language. The modern apologist would find but few readers if he brought out a work embodying the philosophical arguments of Butler and the historical evidences of Paley couched in the grave and decorous language of those eighteenth-century writers. He would modernise, split up sentences, aim at quickness, brightness, and effect, at the expense of sonorous periods and academical punctiliousness, however much he might admire the old authors whose better English belonged to more leisured times. There are, however, two reasons for doubting the validity of relegating Minucius to the third-century group. Firstly, di Capua cannot deny that there was a struggle between the rival schools, the Frontonian and the Ciceronian reaction, which must have included a transition period before the latter won clear. What prevents Minucius from being an early adherent of the newly risen stylists before the close of the second century, while Tertullian was a belated partisan of Fronto? It is surely not just to draw a hard and fast line between the second century and the third, as if the change had been abrupt, and all authors could be separated into two watertight compartments. Secondly and further, a simple explanation of the Ciceronian flavour of Minucius would be that he lived nearer the time when the old standards had not yet been so seriously disturbed by the influence of the group named after Fronto, and had written the *Octavius* between 140 and 160 in the style which he had been taught in earlier life at the rhetorical schools which he attended. Therefore, so far as di Capua is concerned, he has failed to prove anything decisive by the criterion of the ' compositio numerosa.' The way is thus open to consider what di Capua believes to be excluded by the rhythm, viz. that the

style and syntax of Minucius resemble the period of Fronto. The tutor of M. Aurelius is credited with the foundation of a style which combined archaism, modernism, and preciosity. The vocabulary was enriched by obsolete words culled from ancient authors, by poetical expressions derived from the poets, especially from Ennius and Plautus, by Greek words, by current slang and new coinage. The comparatively simple rules of the old orators regarding composition were developed into directions for a mass of figures and rhythms. Form was everything, so that less effort was made in material thought than in producing effect. Though its chief exponents were Africans such as Fronto, Gellius, Florus, Tertullian, this is only an accidental circumstance and does not point to its being of African origin. Frontonianism was not provincialism but simply in the main archaism with a conservative and national motive, seated at Rome, and evolved from the pedants of the first century. Philologists like W. Kroll [1] and E. Norden dismiss the suggestion that the so-called African Latin as such ever existed.[2] Harnack denies that Minucius can belong to the school of Fronto and Gellius, but others [3] are equally convinced that he does, so that Monceaux is compelled to argue that these authors were imitated at least down to the fifth century. Definite Frontonian characteristics have been noted in the style of Minucius. He is fond of the old and the new and of the Greek in vocabulary, likes to be poetical at times, will paraphrase where he could write a single word, and thoroughly riots in the figures of chiasmus and antithesis, with an unrestrained use of every other. The opinion of Harnack has been combated in particular by L. Dalmasso (*Rivista di filol. class.* 1909, pp. 7–37). He cannot see in Minucius the faithful disciple of Cicero and Virgil. The author of the *Octavius* has a polychrome style, in which archaism finds a place. Dalmasso discovers in Minucius numerous examples of archaisms, which may conveniently

[1] *Rhein. Mus.* lii. 1897.

[2] On the other hand, see E. Wölfflin in *Archiv f. lat. Lex.* vii. 1892, pp. 467–484, on alleged traces of African Latin in Min.

[3] *e.g.* H. Boenig, *M. Min. Fel.* Progr. 1897, pp. 31–32; Monceaux, who finds in Min. imitation of Fronto, Florus, and Apuleius, pp. 505–506.

be put under eight heads. (1) In spelling: 'inicum' for 'iniquum,' 'locuntur' for 'loquuntur,' 'cerimonis' for 'ceremoniis.'[1] (2) In the use of the singular abstract for the concrete plural, *e.g.* 'philosophia' for 'philosophi.' (3) In the use of the active form of deponent verbs, and of the passive meaning of them. (4) In the use of the indicative mood in oratio obliqua, and in general of the indicative instead of the subjunctive. (5) In the employment of bimembral asyndeton, *e.g.* 'egetis algetis,' 'imperant regnant,' 'uri cremari.' (6) In rhyme, *e.g.* 'aut puniendum est aut pudendum,' 'spumantibus fumantibus,' 'cautelam medelam,' 'spem opem.' (7) In the occurrence of words only found in him, which shows that he had recourse to rare ones.[2] (8) In generally archaic forms of substantives, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. Thus, considering the size of the *Octavius*, there are marked traces of archaism. The strictly African characteristics, Semitisms, Punisms, and Hebraisms, are either wanting or appear only to a very small extent. The lexicology,[3] grammar, and style of Minucius reveal Frontonian influences. Approaching the subject from a wider point of view, E. Norden (*op. cit.*) associates Minucius with those writers of the second century who followed the rules of the Greek sophists and orators, but finds him free from the excesses of Fronto and Apuleius. There are two peculiarities in the style of Minucius: symmetry of phrase carried too far, and asyndeton in two, three, four, and five members. Five elements in the style of Minucius are distinguished by J. P. Waltzing.[4] His principal model is Cicero, whom he knows by heart, which is seen in the choice of words, the harmonious periods, the metrical clauses, the accumulation of synonyms, and the

[1] As the unique MS. is a minuscule of the ninth century, one could scarcely press these examples of spelling.

[2] Examples are: notaculum, multivira, irrotare, poenitenter, astrangulatus. A number of other words like 'litabilis' are used by Min. for the first time.

[3] See for this Prof. J. P. Waltzing's *Lexicon Minucianum*.

[4] Introd. to his edition of Min. with commentary, 1909, pp. 26–27. See pt. 2, p. 70, for a bibliography of works on the style and language of Min. Waltzing himself here provides a complete and methodical study of the peculiarities of vocabulary, grammar, and style of Minucius.

frequent constructions of asyndeton and chiasmus in varied forms. But another stylist has brought Minucius under his spell, to wit Seneca, especially in the second part of the *Octavius*. He is prodigal of antitheses, and he cuts up his harmonious periods by the introduction of short phrases or 'sententiae.' In the next place he loves archaisms, vulgarisms, and poetic expressions. Two more characteristics remain. Minucius makes new words to express new ideas, and to established words gives new significations. Finally, he has also his own originality, his own personality. The result is a complex style of composite order but in no wise discordant.

Sufficient has been said to show that Harnack is too hasty in thrusting Minucius out of the second century on the score of style. Such comparative philological studies as have so far been made are not unanimous in supporting him, and the weight is, in fact, on the other side.

A very interesting point naturally suggests itself. If Minucius belongs to the second century he is the real beginning of Latin ecclesiastical literature, and not merely the first Roman Christian Latin author. As far as Rome is concerned it was almost a Greek-speaking city during the time of the Emperors, so vast was the foreign population who spoke and traded in this universal language. Amongst these immigrants, and especially the Septuagint-addicted Jews, the early Church in Rome obtained its adherents. When it began to produce literature it was naturally in Greek, *e.g.* the Epistle of Pope Clement (92–101) to the Corinthians, the *Shepherd* written by Hermas, brother of Pope Pius the first (140–155), Justin's first (153–155) and second (*c.* 160) *Apologies*, Tatian's *Address to the Greeks* about the same time as Justin, and on into the third century, when Hippolytus wrote the *Philosophumena* after the pontificate of Callixtus (217–222), and many other works in Greek. When did Latin first appear in the Roman Church literature? Harnack [1] thinks that it was in the work *adversus Aleatores* denouncing gambling, which he ascribes to Pope Victor (189–199), but the author imitates Cyprian, and the tract

[1] *Texte und Untersuchungen*, v. 1, Leipzig, 1888.

must belong to the end of the third century. The Muratorian fragment, an illiterate composition, perhaps a version of original Greek, dated *c.* 200, is Western and claimed to be Roman. In the Cyprianic collection of correspondence appear two letters from the Roman clergy in charge of the see in the vacancy between Fabian and Cornelius (250–251), numbers 8 and 21, on the subject of the lapsed in the Decian persecution, which are the first extant in Latin in the correspondence of the Roman Church. They are full of vulgarisms, and grammatical errors and confusions. At this date, however, there was a Roman priest who for the first time shows, in his *de Trinitate* (*c.* 250), that a Roman cleric can write good and elegant Latin. This was Novatian. We have seen that Minucius must be placed before Novatian, and therefore he has the honour of initiating Roman Latin Christian literature. But to whom goes the primary honour? Africa remained Latin to the core and was never Hellenised as was Rome. Tertullian wrote in 197 the *ad Martyres*, the *ad Nationes*, and the *Apologeticus* in this order.[1] The *ad Martyres* is therefore the only rival of the *Octavius* for the primary place in Latin Christian literature, and Tertullian the only disputant with Minucius for the proud title of the first of the Latin Fathers.

6. The sixth argument of Harnack. The purely philosophical Christianity professed by Minucius is a distilled product which could not be expected in a Latin of the second century. He could only have written in such a polished philosophical style, and with such an unessential conception of Christianity, following after the literary activity of a whole generation. Reply. If a generation of Latin Christian writers had preceded Minucius, who were they? Tertullian must be the only one known, since it is evident that Minucius preceded Novatian and Cyprian. As for his polished philosophical style, this does not exclude him from the second century, for Tatian has the same

[1] Allusions to circumstances connected with the victory of Sept. Severus over Pescennius Niger and Albinus at Lyons, Feb. 19, 197, date these compositions. In the *ad Martyres* the campaign is just over; in the *ad Nationes*, i. 17, Severus has consolidated his power; in the *Apol.* he is holding the celebrations in the autumn for his success (xxxv. 11).

purpose of reaching the educated classes. If the Christianity of Minucius is 'purely philosophical' and a 'distilled product,' and is indefinite on essential particulars, many see in this an indication of an earlier and not a later date. The martyr Apollonius, whose second-century *Acta* perhaps Tertullian had read, is a Christian Stoic with a very simple creed. Says the Prefect to him, after Apollonius has expounded monotheism (ix.), 'Surely, you were not brought here to talk philosophy' (x.), and, at the end of the defence, 'You have philosophised long enough' (xxiii. F. C. Conybeare, *op. cit.*). Also Athenagoras in the second century speaks after the same manner as Minucius. J. Geffcken (*Zwei griechische Apologeten*, 1906, p. 279, n. 2) has an easy answer to Harnack's objection. In the *Octavius* we have a work which, to some extent, belongs to that knot of Greek apologists which Tertullian and Lactantius seek to cut.

7. Harnack says that, according to Min. ix. 4 and xxviii. 10, 'sacerdos' was the current term for the Christian official. This does not indicate the time of M. Aurelius. Reply. The word 'sacerdos' in the *Octavius* does not occur in such a manner as to warrant the positive affirmation that this title for the presiding minister at Christian services is technically used in the ecclesiastical sense. The heathen speaker first mentions it, and with some hesitation, in connexion with a vile calumny representing the Christian 'antistes' or 'sacerdos' as the centre of a form of phallic worship. All the Christian does, in refuting the slander, is to repeat the word 'sacerdos,' and he may be adopting the Pagan nomenclature only for the sake of convenience. If the heathen had not used the expression 'antistes ac sacerdos' to describe what he meant, then, we may ask, what would it have been? But we are not compelled to stand on this ground alone. The occurrence of the word 'sacerdos,' in designation of the order of the Christian ministry, cannot furnish any reasons against the inclusion of a book in the second century.[1] (*a*) Harnack is refuted 'ex ore suo.' When claiming for Pope Victor the composi-

[1] A. d'Alès gives a spirited reply to Harnack in *Études*, 1905, pp. 467–469.

tion of the homily *adversus Aleatores*, he is quite aware that the expressions ' sacerdotalis dignitas ' and ' sacerdos ' are found therein, but this does not prevent him from assigning the work to the second century. He admits that ' sacerdos ' in the sense of Christian priest occurs in the oldest writings of Tertullian, and that the notion of the priesthood existed well-developed in the Church towards A.D. 200. (*b*) The evidence from Tertullian is conclusive. The Christian priest is called ' sacerdos ' by him many times. His first mention is in *ad Nat.* i. 7 (in the year 197). Ignorant gossips, he has said, have spread the stories about Thyestean banquets, and then adds : ' Besides, is it not absurd that the profane should be acquainted with what the priest (sacerdos) does not know ? ' The three orders of clergy, the ' sacerdos summus ' or ' episcopus,' the ' presbyter,' and the ' diaconus ' are referred to in *de Bapt.* xvii. We have again the expressions ' sacerdotalia munera ' (*de Praescript.* xli.), ' sacerdotalis ordo ' (*de Exhort. Cast.* vii.), and in *de Virg. Vel.* ix. a woman, he says, cannot exercise ' sacerdotale officium.' (*c*) Even if no earlier instances of the use of ' sacerdos ' in ecclesiastical Latin can be produced, it cannot be shown to be a neologism introduced by Tertullian at the close of the second century. The office and order existed in the Greek-speaking Roman Church in the time of Pope Clement, whose episcopate was, according to Eusebius, A.D. 92–101, and who frequently refers to the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons in his *Epistle to the Corinthians*. It is true that he writes ' presbuteros ' not ' hiereus,' but the Latin language could not translate the term in any other way than by ' sacerdos ' in view of what it stood for.

8. The eighth argument of Harnack is lexicographical. In *Oct.* ix. 1 we read : ' per universum orbem sacraria ista taeterrima impiae coitionis adolescunt ' (' the abominable " sacraria " of this impious association are multiplying all over the world '). In *Apologeticus* xvi. ' sacrarium ' means ' temple.' Keim therefore translated it correctly in the above passage by ' Bethaus ' (oratory). Would one have so spoken in the second century ? Were there actually, at that time, special ' church edifices ' ? and ' per universum

orbem' too? This one passage alone would, in itself, place the book in the third century. Harnack adds this note. In the Latin translation of Polyc. *ad Philipp.* iv., and pseudo-Ignatius, *ad Tars.* ix., we find 'sacrarium' for 'thusiasterion.' But Minucius could hardly have meant 'altars,' since, with this, 'adolescunt' does not very well agree, and it is probable that something is meant that can be publicly seen. It is certain that in the first half of the third century there were special church buildings. Harnack is so convinced that 'sacraria' is a synonym for 'churches,' and so settles the date of the *Octavius* without having recourse to any other argument, that he returns to the charge in another work.[1] For answer we begin by admitting the support of Tertullian. In *Apol.* xvi. he quotes Tacitus to the effect that Pompey entered the 'Templum' at Jerusalem but found no image therein. Tertullian remarks that had such existed it would have been 'in sacrario suo.' Elsewhere (*adv. Marcionem* iv. 13) the twelve Apostles are twelve stones as it were a sacrarium of faith: 'lapides solidi fide, quos de lavacro Iordanis Iesus verus elegit et in sacrarium testamenti sui recepit,' as Joshua chose twelve stones out of Jordan 'in arcam testamenti conditos.' It is not sufficient, however, to determine the sense of 'sacrarium' in Minucius by Tertullian alone. The primary meaning is the place where sacred objects are kept, the sacristy of a temple, and from thence the temple itself, no doubt, but this is not the only one. There is another naturally transferred signification, 'a secret place' (cf. Cicero, *Catil.* I. ix. 24; II. vi. 13; Seneca, *Q.N.* VII. xxxi. 3). That this is what is meant in Minucius is fixed by two relevant passages. The heathen in *Oct.* x. 2 reproaches the Christians with having no altars, temples, or public statues. Therefore when he has spoken of 'sacraria' he cannot have had Christian basilicas in mind. It would have been absurd for him to bemoan the erection of such buildings all over the empire and almost in the next breath to object that the Christian religion cannot be respectable because it does not possess them. But if he is visualising 'sacraria' as secret

[1] *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christenthums*, II. 1906, p. 20.

retreats, well guarded from discovery, in remote places, or underground like the Catacombs at Rome, where shameless orgies of a necessarily secret character are indulged in, then we can understand them as being, in his opinion, ' taeterrima,' and his horror at the prospect of their spread all over the world with the rapidity of an insidious disease. The Christian in xxxii. 1–3 not only admits the fact that his sect has neither images, temples, nor altars but takes the trouble to say why. Images are not required because man himself is the image of God ; no temple can contain God ; altars are useless since God desires not animal or other material sacrifices but only those of a pure heart and life. Clearly the Christians of the time of Minucius would not erect buildings for their services, because they would have conveyed the impression that their God was like any pagan god confined within the temple precincts. There was, however, another and primary reason. The Christian religion was interdicted and its ceremonies were perforce concealed (x. 1, 2), meetings being held in secret by night (viii. 4). This circumstance brought down upon them the venomous charge of Celsus (*c.* A.D. 178) that the main object of Christianity was to preserve itself as a secret society, consequently it erected no altars, statues, and temples (Orig. *c. Celsum* viii. 17). The first established mention of a church is that of Edessa, which was destroyed by a flood in 201. In the West there were no Christian basilicas until the middle of the third century. What was the situation in the second century ? It was nearly that of the first. As in the time of St. Paul, Christian worship was still carried on in private houses (Rom. xvi. 23 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 19, 20). Justin M. describes (1 *Apol.* lxv.) the celebration of the Eucharist at ' the place where those who are called brethren are assembled,' on Sundays, both in town and country (lxvii.). This place is obviously a house where suitable accommodation may be had, as is seen from Justin's *Acta*. At his trial Justin tries to evade the examining Prefect's inquiry concerning the exact location of the Christian ' meeting ' by observing that God, who may not be circumscribed by place, can be worshipped anywhere.

But the Prefect insists upon a direct reply, whereupon Justin confesses that the Christian meeting attended by him was at the house of Martinus situated above the Timotinian Bath. Here, too, Justin lodged and received pupils. Nevertheless nothing will induce him to admit that he knows of any other Christian 'meeting' in Rome. Others there must have been, for the time is *c.* 165 in the episcopate of Anicetus. By the epoch of Tertullian, before the end of the second century, Christian congregations were to be found in every part of the Roman world and beyond it, even in the inaccessible parts of Britain (*adv. Iudaeos*, vii.). What could the pagan Caecilius have called these 'meetings' but 'sacraria,' just as he would have designated the caves and subterranean dens of Mithras? Doubtless it is of the meeting places of Sunday congregations of Christians, whether in private houses or catacomb chambers, that the heathen speaks when he complains that there are 'per universum orbem sacraria.'

9. For his ninth and last argument in favour of the priority of Tertullian, recourse is had by Harnack to general, not detailed, comparisons. It takes the form of three questions which we condense as follows. (*a*) The coincidences in Tertullian with Minucius are confined to two books only, the *Apologeticus* and the *ad Nationes*.[1] If Tertullian has used Minucius why has he not also done so in his other writings? (*b*) The *Octavius* has but a modest historical position as compared with the *Apologeticus*. If, as some suppose, it appeared as early as A.D. 176, why did it not make an epoch in the Latin Church? (*c*) Why are the passages in the *Octavius* which are in common with the *Apologeticus* written in the caustic style of Tertullian and not after the polished manner of Minucius?

In reply we will take the objections of Harnack in order. (*a*) Monceaux had already remarked that it would have

[1] In the *ad Nat.*, says Harnack, there are few which show an independent connexion with the *Octavius*, and the rest are faint as compared with those of the *Apol.*, so that they do not count for much. He suggests that Min. read the *ad Nat.*, made extracts, and then polished up the vulgarisms of Tert. We are far from agreeing that the points of contact with the *ad Nat.* are so weak.

been a miracle if Tertullian, having borrowed from Minucius in the *Apologeticus*, had not done so elsewhere. But would it? After all, the *Apologeticus* and the *ad Nationes* are traversing exactly the same ground as the *Octavius*, and if he had been content to leave what he had said without repetition when composing books on a different plan and for another purpose it would not be surprising. Besides, here again the argument can be so easily turned back after the image of Harnack's hour-glass. If Minucius has been indebted so much to two only of Tertullian's works, then why not to more of them? Therefore the argument cancels out. There is, however, no need to resort to a mere 'quid pro quo.' Often there is much less than a paper wall between the *Octavius* and the books of Tertullian excluded by Harnack. The truth is all otherwise than what he says. Tertullian has the habit of repeating himself, especially being fond of taking up an idea again for expansion or more trenchant expression. Consequently, whatever may be the explanation, whether Tertullian is going back to his own original ideas or to the source from which he has first of all obtained them, it is clear that the matter common to the *Octavius*, *Apologeticus*, and *ad Nationes* reappears in several other treatises. Minucius, *Oct.* xviii. 10, 11, argues that the natural cry of 'God,' 'God is great,' 'God is true,' 'if God grant' ('si Deus dederit'), amounts to a confession of the Christian truth that God is One. In *Apol.* xvii. this thought is developed as the 'testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae.' The soul, when truly itself, has only one Name for God. Everyone cries 'Great God,' 'Good God,' 'Which God grant' ('quod Deus dederit'), and acknowledges Him, too, as Judge, 'God sees,' 'I leave it to God,' and 'God will repay me.' The idea is found again in Tertullian's *de Poenit.* v.; *adv. Marc.* i. 9, 10, 18; *de Resurr. Carn.* iii.; *Scorpiace*, ii.; but principally it reappears in an explanatory tract *de Testimonio Animae* on the famous phrase of the *Apologeticus*, 'O testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae.' Here c. ii. Tertullian dramatically calls the witness of the soul to the Unity of God in the exclamations heard at home and abroad, 'Which

may God grant' ('quod Deus dederit'), and 'if God so will' ('si Deus voluerit'). Of these passages the simplest form of the thought is that in Minucius who says nothing about the soul. The formula 'testimonium animae,' which was from the time of Tertullian proper to the argument, is entirely wanting in the *Octavius*. Could Minucius have ignored it if the writing of Tertullian had been before his eyes? Again, in *Oct.* xxxv. 3, Minucius employs an image, familiar before his time in apocalyptic literature, of the inexhaustible fires of volcanoes as the type of the perpetual fires of hell. Tertullian, *Apol.* xlviii., has developed the idea into a short homily on the future plight of the wicked, with this difference, that he identifies the volcanic burnings with the judgment fire of God. In his *de Poenitentia*, xii. he develops in another way, enlarging on the natural phenomena, but still regarding them as a minor manifestation of the horrors of hell. In all three passages there is exactly the same basic concept, but its expression in the first is by far the simplest. On the resurrection Minucius (xxxiv. 11, 12) puts together in his own compressed but perfect style a few natural analogies, the rising of the sun and the stars, the return of the flowers and the leaves, and the new life from the decayed seed. He indulges only in an expansion of one of them. 'Like a tree in winter so is the body of man for a time: apparent dryness conceals true vigour. Why be impatient for its revival and return in the very middle of winter's rest? The body also has its spring time, and for that we must wait.' Tertullian in *Apol.* xlviii. expands, deepens, and ennobles the same thought. 'All Nature brooding upon man's future resurrection' in Minucius, becomes in Tertullian 'the power of God, who formed the great body of this world from that which was not . . . and animated it with a spirit that gives breath to all souls, and set it for a sign in itself of the resurrection of man as evidence for us.' Further analogies are added by Tertullian in addition to some mentioned by Minucius, the return of darkness, of the seasons, of fruits. 'Shalt thou, man, "dominus omnium morientium et resurgentium,"' concludes Tertullian, 'die only to perish? In whatever place thy

dissolution, whatever the means by which thou wast destroyed, absorbed, effaced, reduced to nothing, the same shall restore thee. To him belongs that very nothing, whose is the whole.' It will be noticed that Tertullian does not mention the flowers and the trees, and comes to his climax not by pursuing one of his natural images, like Minucius, but by means of a fresh thought, that of man's superiority over the rest of creation. The omitted analogies are, however, found in the *de Resurrectione Carnis* xii., and an entirely new one added, the return of the moon. The climax is similar to that of the *Apologeticus*, but the whole passage is freely expanded, betraying every effort for effect. It is again curious that the germ of these passages of Tertullian is expressed in Minucius, and one can only ask, if he condensed the matter in Tertullian, why did he exclude from his précis such a striking argument as that of the superiority of man? Finally, there is a similar inter-relationship on the subject of the Christian objection to wreaths. In Min. xii. 6 the heathen says: 'You do not bind garlands upon your heads . . . you even reject wreaths (*coronas*) for your graves.' The Christian in xxxviii. 2 replies that the Christians are far from lacking appreciation of the colour and perfume of flowers, such as the rose and the lily, which when gathered are either arranged in a free and loose manner ('sparsis ac solutis'), or made into garlands to be worn round the neck. 'You must really forgive us,' he adds, 'for not crowning our heads with them. It is the way with us to inhale the nice perfume of the flower with the nose not with occiput or hair.' As for not crowning the dead (3) the reason is that they cannot be sensible of it, and if they could be they would not care. This latter is not a convincing reply, but the exact reason is found in Tertullian's *de Corona* (x.) which is another book devoted to the further explication of a single subject already touched upon by him. Both in appearance and in fact the crowning of the dead with a wreath is idolatry. In c. v. Tertullian has more correspondent matter with Minucius. Only by the smell and colour of the flowers of which wreaths are made is pleasure afforded, but when a floral crown is worn the

head is only conscious of the binding band, being unable to distinguish colour or to inhale the scent. 'It is as unnatural to yearn for a flower with the head as to crave for food with the ear or for sound with the nose.' Here is nothing about smelling with the hair, but this appears, by itself, in a further passage which completes the correspondences with Minucius. In *Apol.* xlii. Tertullian writes: 'A crown for my head I do not buy . . . in my opinion flowers are more pleasing when free and loose all around ('liberis et solutis et undique vagis'). But even if they are made up into a crown we become aware of it by means of our noses. Let those suit themselves who smell through the hair.' The general idea of the essential character of a wreath consisting in the enjoyment of its perfume and colour by the wearer, is one of those commonplaces which the Christians only derived from the sarcastic opinions of some of the philosophers. To Nigrinus the Platonist it seemed that those who delighted in the odours of violets and roses should be crowned under the nose (Lucian, *In Nigrino*). Clement of Alexandria (*Paedag.* ii. 8) expatiates on the same subject. The humidity and coldness of a floral crown is bad, he says, for the head. Besides when flowers are put on the head above the eyes and the nose one loses all the pleasure of them. As for the scent it goes up into the air. But the rather weak jest about smelling with the pate or the hair of the head seems to occur in Minucius and Tertullian for the first time, in the former in combination and in the latter separately. Comparison of these coincidences in the Latin increases the conviction that they cannot be independent, and that if Tertullian has imitated the *Octavius* in the *Apologeticus* he has done so in the *de Corona* as well.

(*b*) What Latin tradition can Harnack expect concerning the *Octavius* if it is as early as A.D. 176? There is no Latin tradition at all before Tertullian concerning any Latin author. And if the latter took up the *Octavius*, a book composed for a very select circle, and wrote a larger and much more imposing work for the public at large containing all the essential matter of this little dialogue, without in any

way indicating his obligations, would it be surprising if the eclipse of Minucius were complete? Besides, the *Apologeticus* passed into Greek and all the world thus knew of it. Eusebius had a Greek translation from which he often quotes gratefully as shedding some little light upon the gloom of the West (*H.E.* ii. 2; iii. 32; ii. 25; v. 5; iii. 20). However, Minucius plays no small part in the history of Latin ecclesiastical literature. Excluding Tertullian, it was no modest rôle for the author of the *Octavius* to have been imitated and exploited to the full by such giants of the West as Cyprian and Lactantius.

(*c*) Monceaux[1] had already called attention to the style in the passages common to Minucius and Tertullian, for example, the attacks upon idolatry, the biting mockery of the worship and customs of the heathen, which are, he says, quite in the manner of Tertullian and in place in his vigorous satire, but do not suit the more delicate talent of Minucius, his somewhat thin elegance and finical grace. According to Monceaux, moreover, it would appear that Minucius is fully conscious of the impropriety, in a conversation between friends, introduced by matter taken from the *Apologeticus* which must be shocking to all of them. Consequently it is necessary for the heathen speaker to apologise for the improbability before he begins his gross attack upon the Christians: 'if I let myself go in the cause I have undertaken, you must excuse me' (viii. 3), and that he should be represented at the end as returning to complete equanimity (xiv. 1). But Monceaux has not taken into consideration the object of the work, which is to allow a heathen fully to state his case, to be adequately answered, and to be converted in the end. With regard to the style of the common matter which Harnack and Monceaux award to Tertullian, if this does not belong to Minucius there is not much left of the *Octavius* beyond a short introduction, the framework of the dialogue, and connecting links, upon which to found an opinion of the style which by process of dissection is separated as properly his own. Surely this is a very arbitrary proceeding. We should *a priori* expect an

[1] *Op. cit.* i. p. 478.

author of average ability to be able to vary his tone in conformity with his subject, and with that change would naturally come a modification of style. When Minucius turns from the felicitations of friendship to the strife of polemic the poet must give place to the orator, otherwise he would have proved totally inadequate for his task. We therefore see no difficulty in viewing the *Octavius* as a homogeneous whole. Moreover, when the common matter in Minucius is submitted to examination, it is not found in fact that the mordant characteristics of Tertullian appear. One can only feel that the critics have been predisposed to the priority of Tertullian and have been led into the error of arguing in a circle. But Harnack's objection is once more capable of inversion. Suppose that Tertullian, when reading the concise and sober Minucius, thought the matter useful but was not satisfied with its expression and concluded that more force, more incisiveness, more up-to-date freshness was necessary in his *Apologeticus* to get the full effect? That would not be surprising in Tertullian. He has done the same with his own material again and again. When he has a good notion he never tires of adding fresh touches here and there.

After having fought so stoutly for the priority of Tertullian, Harnack thus concludes. The grounds upon which he has argued are far-reaching. It is unnecessary to look for proof in the comparison of textual details in the two authors. Minucius wrote not merely after Tertullian, but as Massebieau, Monceaux, and Neumann have recognised, a considerable time afterwards. Nothing more definite, however, can be said. He may have compiled the dialogue under Alexander Severus (222–235), but it is much more probable that he wrote between the period of Maximinus Thrax and Decius (*i.e.* under the Gordians or Philip the Arabian, 238–249). Jerome, therefore, has reported correctly. We cannot accept this conclusion. However imposing the arguments of Harnack at first appear to be, and in spite of the perfect confidence in them of so great an authority, upon close examination we have found none of them decisive and some of them indeed inadmissible.

We are consequently free to incline to the opposite side, and, in our opinion, the evidence which has been brought together in refutation of the foregoing arguments is cumulatively in favour of the priority of Minucius.

The historians in the Minucian controversy have been well served by the literary critics, but this is not all the assistance they have received. Antiquaries have sallied forth into the field and once more displayed the prowess of their imagination when armed only with a modicum of fact. We are thus provided with what we may call 'the epigraphic argument.' At the ancient and important fortress town of Constantine, capital of the province of that name in Algeria, and formerly Cirta Julia or Colonia Sittianorum, in the Roman province of Numidia, six Latin inscriptions [1] on the fragments of a triumphal arch were discovered by the French in 1880, relating to a certain 'M. Caecilius Q. f. Quir. Natalis,' and showing him to have been a magistrate and a prominent citizen of the place between the years A.D. 210 and 217. From them it is gathered that Marcus Caecilius Natalis was the son of Quintus and of ancient Roman (properly Sabine) descent, his family belonging to the Quirine tribe. During the joint reign of Severus and Caracalla, *i.e.* in 210, he was a Triumvir or chief magistrate of Cirta. While Caracalla was sole emperor, *i.e.* between 212 and 217, M. Caec. Nat. held the highest magistracy, that of Triumvir Quinquennalis, an office lasting for five years. In this position he exhibited extraordinary public spirit, at his own personal expense erecting a triumphal arch in honour of Caracalla, brazen statues personifying the virtues of the emperor such as his 'indulgentia,' and a small temple. His munificence even extended to the lavish expenditure of providing dramatic shows for the citizens during a period of seven days. Now the friend of Minucius Felix at Rome, the heathen interlocutor of the dialogue *Octavius*, who became a Christian convert, was named Caecilius Natalis and belonged to Cirta. Upon this coincidence, together with the epigraphic information above, and combined with a passage in Eusebius, a remarkable story has

[1] Mommsen, *C.I.L.* viii. 6996; 7094–7098.

been founded by H. Dessau.[1] Assuming that the Caecilius of the dialogue is a real character, and that his origin from Cirta, and the coincidence of his nomen and cognomen, indicating gens and familia, with that of the magistrate, are sufficient to establish personal identity, Dessau proceeds to sketch the career of Caecilius from the year 212, about which time he may have completed his 'quinquennalitas' by the works and celebrations already described. Ruined probably by this unusual prodigality it became necessary for him to repair to Rome in 213 or thereabouts, where he found a friend, perhaps an old one, in M. Minucius Felix, a fellow countryman, to whom he attached himself in the most intimate manner. Minucius Felix was a Christian, but unorthodox, a member of the Theodotian sect, which explains his silence on the Divinity of our Lord. He introduced M. Caecilius Natalis to his friend Octavius, also a Theodotian, who converted the ruined Triumvir of Cirta to his faith. Here Dessau assumes a further identity. M. Caecilius Natalis, former magistrate of Cirta, now a Christian at Rome, is none other than the Roman confessor Natalis or Natalius (Natalios), of whom an account is given by Eusebius (*H.E.* v. 28). This man, as we have previously narrated in Chapter V., was persuaded by Theodotus and Asklepiodotus, leaders of the Theodotian schism at Rome, to accept the post of bishop of the sect at a salary of about £75 a year. But Natalius soon had qualms of conscience about his heterodoxy, yet his troubled dreams did not bring about his repentance. One night, however, he received such a severe castigation at the hands of angelic correctors, that he hasted in sackcloth and ashes to the presence of Pope Zephyrinus and the orthodox clergy and laity, begging in the most abject fashion to be admitted into the Church, a request which was only granted with great difficulty. This identification is, according to Dessau, the first decisive proof for the date of the *Octavius*, and cannot be invalidated unless it can be unquestionably established that Minucius wrote before 212, shortly after which date M. Caec. Nat.

[1] See his articles in *Hermes*, xv. (1880), p. 471 f.; xl. (1905), pp. 373–386.

was converted, since he had been a Christian for some time before the death of Zephyrinus in 217. The dialogue in the *Octavius*, therefore, took place shortly after 212, and the book was written not long after the death of Octavius, before the death of Zephyrinus, as Caecilius must still have been a Theodotian, with the intention not only of commemorating the deceased Octavius but also of panegyrising the Confessor M. Caecilius Natalis, whose splendid bearing before the judges inspired the passage on the martyrs (xxxvii. 1). In this way Dessau assigns the *Octavius* to the beginning of the third century and awards priority to Tertullian. But can Dessau's arguments be accepted? Of the two identifications made by him, the first may stand by itself and has been better received than the second. Against it we have Boenig (*op. cit.* pp. 29–31), Harnack, who considers the identification of the two Caecilii doubtful and not very helpful (*op. cit.*), Massebieau, who remarks on the singular coincidence of the names but holds that it cannot be insisted upon (*op. cit.* p. 342), and Waltzing, who definitely dismisses it, after a full examination, as improbable (*Studia Minuciana*, pp. 63–68). But in favour are Monceaux, who thinks the identity probable (*op. cit.* pp. 475–476), G. Boissier, who admits it (*Fin du paganisme*, i. p. 263), and Dr. Salmon, who accepts the evidence of the inscriptions as decisive. 'We see no good reason,' says Dr. Salmon, 'for refusing to identify this Caecilius Natalis with the Caecilius of the dialogue' (*Dict. Christ. Biog.*, art. 'Min. Fel.'). We range ourselves, however, on the side of the sceptics. The apparent ages of the two Caecilii are incompatible with identity. In the dialogue we have a very obvious picture of three comparatively young men of whom Caecilius is junior, as we have already shown (c. I.). Nothing can possibly be clearer than the youthfulness of the convert, from many unmistakable indications. Equally nothing can be more manifest than that the Quinquennalis of Cirta must in 212 have reached an age consistent with the high dignity of his office. His public career in the municipality of Cirta must have involved years of service. His first step upon the civic ladder, as quaestor, had seen

him in the local financial offices collecting property tax for the government, and generally engaged in accountancy. From routine work he had been called to undertake, as aedile, the general administrative functions now vested in a city council, the supervision of highways, drainage, water supplies, civic festivals, and so forth, along with the duties of an inferior magistrate. At an age which must at least have conformed with the law, M. Caec. Nat. became one of the three chief magistrates of his native town, a Triumvir. If we say that he was about forty years old, when two years later he was raised to the highest magistracy of Quinquennalis in 212, we cannot be far out. The full maturity of this experienced official and public-spirited donor of patriotic monuments and theatrical entertainments, upon reaching the acme of his civic career, accords ill with the youthful spontaneity and peeved indiscretions of the vivacious associate of Minucius. Sheer fitness of things demands an interval of age of at least two decades. Reverting to the second identification of M. Caec. Nat. with the Roman Confessor Natalius, one wonders if any critic could seriously rally to the support of Dessau. To begin with, the events crowded into the life of the magistrate after leaving, it would seem with some haste, the city where his public life had been crowned with the highest honours, and becoming almost instantly converted at Rome in 213, leave insufficient space of time before the death of Zephyrinus on December 21, 217. In not more than four years Caecilius is a prominent confessor in the persecutions, a bishop of the Theodotian sect, passes through a period of doctrinal struggle, and is received into the orthodox Church. It is not impossible, but the rapidity of the sequence makes a demand upon credibility. Besides, the personal circumstances of the Caecilius of the inscriptions do not agree with those of the friend of Minucius. The latter appears in a somewhat subordinate capacity, probably that of law pupil, which would be an extraordinary position for one who had been the chief magistrate on the bench at Cirta. But if we are wrong in our deduction as to his relationship to Minucius, still there remains the question why does not Minucius give

any hint of the true grandeur of this personage whose conversion, in this case, would have enormously added to the strength of the dialogue as a Christian apologetic work? Furthermore we have only to glance at the presumptive history of M. Caec. Nat. to see that Minucius could hardly have failed to inform his readers of the former position of his illustrious convert, who must have been a thoroughgoing Pagan in his time, and a moving spirit in the persecutions in North Africa. His infancy would be passed in the midst of the Aurelian storm, and he might have been old enough at the time to preserve faint memories of the martyrs of Scili (July 17, 180) and of Apollonius at Rome. Four years after Severus ascended the throne, when M. Caec. Nat. would be about twenty-five years old, the magistrates in North Africa were taking the severest measures with confessed Christians in response to the demands of the mob, which moved Tertullian to write at Carthage his first composition, the *ad Martyres* (197). He was about thirty at the moment when Severus (in 202) issued his rescript requiring all magistrates to proceed against new converts, with the result that, amongst others, the women Perpetua and Felicitas suffered death at Carthage (March 7, 202 or 203), a persecution which persisted for several years, and even broke out again in 212 under Caracalla in connexion with a Christian soldier who refused to wear a festal crown in honour of the emperor's gift to the army, which moved Tertullian to write the *de Corona*. We have now arrived at the moment of M. Caec. Nat.'s elevation to the chief magistracy of Cirta. Can he all this time have been inactive against the Christians? On the contrary, in the discharge of his duties, he must have been an active persecutor, a very congenial part for one to play who was such an enthusiastic upholder of the state, and patron of the heathen stage. Apart from the improbability of such a man being so easily induced to join a Christian sect, why does not Minucius claim the conversion of a lifelong enemy as a signal example? As he has not done so, it would appear that he had the same reason for silence as Eusebius in his history. No noise was made about this remarkable conversion simply because it had not taken

place. If it had, it would surely have been preserved in Latin tradition along with the case of Apollonius. Lastly, Caecilius betrays no consciousness of a considerable career at Cirta. He has not, like Octavius and Minucius, anything to supply from actual legal experience in actions where Christians have been concerned, but speaks like a young man who has never been out of Rome, and even there has acquired little personal knowledge of the sect he attacks. Turning to the supposed Theodotian career of M. Caecilius Natalis, it is an outrage upon probability to imagine the former Triumvir Quinquennalis of Cirta, however reduced in fortune, to have so lost his self-respect, not to speak of his proud dignity, as to accept a trifling post from a handful of tradespeople at a paltry salary, or to have become so broken in spirit in three or four years, as to weep and roll in sackcloth and ashes at the feet of Zephyrinus and the assembled laity. Neither does the identification explain the theological poverty of Minucius, as we have already proved (c. V.), so that Dessau must be deprived even of this triumph.

Can, then, anything be gained from the Cirtensian inscriptions? Those who assign the *Octavius* to the third century are not averse from retreating to the hypothesis that the convert Caecilius was the son of the magistrate. It makes very little difference as regards actual dating, as then Caecilius might easily have been old enough to be studying law in Rome at the time when his father was erecting his triumphal arch at Cirta. The conjecture remains, naturally, without proof, and can only draw possibility from the previous acceptance of such arguments as those of Harnack. Others, attracted by the suggestion that the Caecilius of the dialogue was the father of the magistrate, are encouraged by a plausible emendation of the text by Baehrens [1] referred to previously (c. I.), which consists in reading in i. 5 'quo Q. Caecilium' for 'quod Caecilium' of the Parisinus, as the text requires 'quo,' and the 'd' of 'quod' may easily have been added to the word by a copyist

[1] Preface to his edition, p. 6. He has been followed by Waltzing, but most editors read 'quo Caecilium' with Halm.

who had been misled by the similarity of the form of the letter 'Q.' belonging to the name 'Q. Caecilius.' This gives the praenomen 'Quintus': it is not mentioned elsewhere in the dialogue. Now the father of the magistrate was one Quintus Caecilius Natalis. He might conceivably have been a young man studying in Rome as early as 160, have been converted to Christianity about that time, but his wife being a Pagan, or other family influence being strong on the heathen side, his son Marcus may have been brought up as a sturdy upholder of the ancestral religion, and have eventually acquired great distinction in public life at Cirta. Doubtless the suggestion is seductive, and perhaps it is less objectionable than the other two founded on the inscriptions, but it entirely lacks corroboration, and must be, like the others, entirely disregarded. These speculations are, in fact, fruitless. The friend of Minucius may be reckoned in any degree of male relationship, or possibly in none at all, to the popular magistrate, during the second half of the second century and the first half of the third. Coincidence of names, contrary to the opinion of Dessau, may signify nothing. His romance is, in any case, inadmissible. The inscriptions at Cirta are quite valueless, in themselves, in the attempt to fix the date of the *Octavius*.

A number of intrinsic points of various degrees of importance which have been raised at one time or another, in connexion with the dating of the *Octavius*, and in addition to those noticed among the replies to Harnack, need not detain us here. We would only produce one drawn from the general comparison of the subject-matter of the *Apologeticus* with that of the *Octavius*, which appears to us as approaching sufficiency in itself.[1] Dealing with the second charge against the Christians under the division 'facinora manifesta,' that of 'laesa maiestas,' Tertullian devotes a long section of ten chapters (xxxv.–xliv.) of his *Apology* to meeting complaints collateral to high treason, which help to brand them as being 'publici hostes.' These are that the Christians cannot be true Romans since they refuse to participate in the state festivals (xxxv.), that their impiety

[1] Cf. J. P. Waltzing in *Bulletin du Musée Belge*, 1911, No. 5.

is the cause of every public disaster and calamity (xl.), and that they are 'infructuosi in negotiis,' that is, 'worthless to trade' (xlii.). Against these charges Tertullian addresses lengthy and careful arguments with very great earnestness and with all the forcefulness he can command. But when we turn to Minucius we can find nothing of this specific nature. In the *Octavius* the Christians are not represented by the heathen in the light of traitors to the throne and state, they have not yet become the object of superstitious suspicions of the darkest kind, and no one has thought of them as being a serious menace to Empire trade. If the disastrous period, with its consequent influence upon public psychology, between the earlier years of the reigns of M. Aurelius and Sept. Severus, had passed before Minucius wrote down the substance of the pagan attack in his dialogue, could he possibly have ignored these, the most plausible and practical, and therefore the most dangerous of all? We think not, however much he might have desired to placate his heathen readers. Less still can we believe that Minucius, on the supposition that he has imitated the *Apologeticus*, could have avoided taking up political points to which Tertullian had attached the very highest importance.

The foregoing discussion contains the most outstanding points which have been raised in the effort to date the *Octavius*. We believe that the book can have been written before 197, and that the cumulative evidence shows that it probably was, so that Lactantius, therefore, is right. In our opinion, already foreshadowed in our argumentation, the *Octavius* belongs to the latter years of the reign of Antoninus Pius,[1] and saw the light during Fronto's lifetime. The conversation on which the dialogue was based would have taken place towards 148, and the composition of the work would not be later than 160, before the condominium of M. Aurelius and L. Verus. If this is correct, the proud title of 'first Father of the Latin Church' must pass from Tertullian and be awarded to Minucius Felix.

[1] P. Schwenke in *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.* ix. (1883), pp. 263–294, after a painstaking discussion on the date of Min. Fel., reaches the same conclusion.

CHAPTER VII

The Relationship between the 'Octavius' and the 'Apologeticus'

Harnack deliberately set aside the question of the internal relationship of the *Octavius* and the *Apologeticus* as a forlorn hope in the discussion for the determination of the date of the former, but as his reasons do not oblige us to believe that Minucius cannot have written before 197, it is now proper to see what there is in this old priority controversy which has filled the stage from the seventeenth century up to our own time. The general grounds upon which the *savants* have built their arguments depend upon the intimacy of relationship which appears in the occurrence and handling of such subjects as the Unity of God, the Resurrection of the dead and the future torments of the wicked, the high purity of Christian morality, the Christian brotherhood, the laudation of the martyrs, the dependence of philosophy upon the Old Testament for certain adumbrations of truth, the existence and functions of demons, identical charges against the Christians retaliated upon the accusers in the same manner, the injustices in the legal procedure against the Christians, the human origin of the Pagan gods, the Pagan idols, myths, and scandals, the Imperial cult, and so forth, wherein can be no doubt of the coincidence in ideas, arguments, treatment, examples, and often in expression, so that dependence of some sort is patent and too close to be accounted for by the explanation that both authors had to meet the same objections and circumstances. Neither, however, cites the other, and therefore the question naturally arises, which was the plagiarist? [1]

[1] The case is illustrated by two Greek apologists. So close is the *Embassy* of Athenagoras to Justin's first *Apology* in matter, use of other authors, and wording, that Athenagoras has been charged with having only rewritten Justin.

In the theological and doctrinal group of these comparisons something has been said in a previous chapter, *e.g.*, on God, the Resurrection, and eternal torments. There are, on the other hand, some dissimilarities. Tertullian maintains the divine character of the Old Testament writings much more distinctly than Minucius, although he does not quote them, and he does actually cite once from the New Testament (*Apol.* xxxi.) on prayer for kings (1 Tim. ii. 2). He explains what takes place at the Christian meeting and mentions the monthly collection of alms for charitable purposes (xxxix.), details of which are sought for in vain in Minucius. On the Logos he is explicit (xvii.–xxi.), whereas Minucius, as we have seen, is vague on the doctrine of the Person of Christ. In such contrasts the marks of earliness or lateness have been seen according to the view-point of the critics. The sections dealing with the charges brought against the Christians display a close agreement on the secret crimes, but it is worth noting that Minucius is more circumstantial, as if writing in an age when Christianity had in no degree dispelled these horrible suspicions. As for the occurrence of such violent recriminations being out of place in a debate like the *Octavius* whose chief tone is moderation, and merely being imposed on the author as a traditional theme in the third century when there was little belief in them, which Minucius well knew, as Monceaux thinks, it is sufficient to refer to the particular object of the work. Two great criminal charges, those of high treason against Emperor and State, and of responsibility for public calamities, which bulk so largely in Tertullian, are entirely absent in Minucius, where their place is occupied by the secret crimes, a fact certainly suggestive of an earlier epoch. On the contrary, Minucius mentions two charges which are not in Tertullian, those of ignorance and of philosophic speculation, both presumptive of the second century rather than of the third. The legal procedure adopted against the Christians described by Minucius (xxviii. 1–4) is paralleled by Tertullian, who, however, makes the juridical character of his apology paramount, dealing, like Justin before him, with the injustice of condemnation for the mere bearing of

the Christian name, and adding another instance of injustice which certainly looks as if he wrote at a later time, when Christianity had reached the conception of a society in the minds of the heathen, and was now held by them to be illegal under an obsolete law. Since Minucius was himself an advocate, there is no need to believe that he was obliged to Tertullian for his legal remarks, contrary to Monceaux, and, in fact, Tertullian, however juridical his temperament, was never called to the bar, and could never have given the personal reminiscences supplied by Minucius. The conclusion from the general comparison of these three groups of related passages, in character, by omissions and additions, would point to Minucius as of greater antiquity. He is on the whole simpler, more rapid, and uncertain on some points as compared with Tertullian, so that if he wrote after him he would have been taking a great step backwards. In the fourth group, where paganism is attacked, the resemblances are so close as to require the minutest examination. In general form the *Octavius* shows a marked contrast to the *Apologeticus*. It is a dialogue of distinctly literary flavour and would naturally fall into a place of development of Latin apologetic which would be parallel to that of the Greek in the second century. If such a development in the West could be made out to have taken place, there would be strong reasons for putting the *Octavius* in an early position. The Minucian style, recognised by Jerome for its excellence, is very far from the abrupt, obscure, and rugged style of Tertullian, and is in no wise stamped with Tertullianism in the related passages, as we have shown in a previous chapter. Indeed one can hardly imagine the fastidious Minucius being able to endure one page of Tertullian, much less study him to the extent of a servile imitation. A reader with no bias of controversy, upon approaching the *Octavius* and the *Apologeticus* for the first time, would be impressed with the greater flavour of antiquity of the former, and subsequent perusals would increase this feeling.

Coming to the detailed comparison, a word or two of caution is necessary. As far as is humanly possible the critic must clear his mind of merely personal impressions,

and of bias in favour of an opinion of priority in either case already formed, if he is to avoid confounding certainty with probability or even with possibility, so that a string of inanities will be produced in place of solid argumentation. Again, while the collective weight of many comparisons cannot be ignored, yet for practical purposes it is best to depend chiefly on a few in which opposite opinions cannot turn upon each other, in which two results are not possible, and no room remains for the objection that the process is a mere play upon forms and words like turning the sands in an hour-glass, according to the witticism of Harnack. Below will be found a table of the more obvious parallel passages in Minucius and Tertullian, compared in some cases with Cicero, from which a few of the most useful instances will be selected.

	Minucius	Tertullian *Apology*	Tertullian *ad Nat.*	Cicero
The unknown gods.	vi. 3		ii. 9	
Heathen national cults and the gods of the Roman Empire.	vi.	xxiv.		
The Pagan miracles.	vii. 3	xxii. 12		*de Nat. Deorum*, II. ii. 6
Christians charged with neglect and contempt of the Roman religion.	viii.	x.		
Christians worship a crucified man.	ix.	xvi.		
The dictum of Socrates.	xiii. 1		ii. 2	
Simonides and Hiero.	xiii. 4	xlvi. 8	ii. 2	*d.N.D.* I. xxii. 60
On God:	xviii. 7–11	xvii.		
(*a*) in a triad of attributes	xviii. 7	xvii. 1		
(*b*) His Nature.	xviii. 8	xvii. 2		
(*c*) His Unity.	xviii. 11	xvi.		*d.N.D.* II. ii. 4

	Minucius	Tertullian *Apology*	Tertullian *ad Nat.*	Cicero
Epicurean opinion that the gods are either apathetic or nonentities.	xix. 8	xlvii. 5	ii. 2	*d.N.D.* I. xxiv. 67 I. xliv. 123
Deification of men.	xxi. 1–2	xi.		
The Saturn myth. Cf. Lact. *Inst. Div.* I. xiii. 8 and I. xi. 55.	xxi. 4–5	x. 7	ii. 12, 116	
Apotheosis of Juba. Cf. *Quod idola*, ii.; Lact. *Inst. Div.* I. xv. 6 and 8.	xxi. 9	xxiv. 8. Cf. xix. 6	ii. 8	
Kings undesirous of apotheosis.	xxi. 10	xxxiii. 3	i. 17	
Fabrication of images.	xxii. 1–5 (Halm, xxiii. 9–13)	xii.		
The images and the swallows.	xxii. 6 (Halm, xxiv. 1)	xii. 7		
Review of sacred rites of the heathen.	xxii. 8 (Halm, xxiv. 3)	xiv. 1		
Ridiculous representation of the gods in mythology and art.	xxiii. 5 (Halm, xxii. 5)	xiii. 7	i. 10	*d.N.D.* I. xlviii. 83; II. xxviii. 70; III. xxxiv. 83
Erigone.	xxiii. 7 (Halm, xxii. 7)		ii. 15	
Burning of Hercules.	do.		ii. 14	
Human behaviour of the Homeric gods.	xxiv. 2–6 (Halm, xxiii. 2–6)	xiv. 2–4	i. 10, cf. ii. 10	*de Div.* II. x. 25; II. xix. 43
Crowning of Homer.	xxiv. 2 (Halm, xxiii. 2)		ii. 7	*de Rep.* IV. v. 5; *Tusc. Disp.* ii 27
Causes of Rome's greatness.	xxv. 1–6	xxv. 2–17 and xxvi.	ii. 9; ii. 17	
Cybele.	xxv. 9	xxv.		
The ancient empires were under Divine Providence.	xxv. 12	xxvi. 1	ii. 17	
Oracular response to Pyrrhus.	xxvi. 6	xxii. 10	ii. 17	*de Div.* II. lvi. 116

	Minucius	Tertullian *Apology*	Tertullian *ad Nat.*	Cicero
Demon of Socrates.	xxvi. 9. Cf. xxxviii. 5	xxii. 1		
Plato's difficulty in finding God.	xxvi. 12	xlvi.		
The Demons.	xxvi. 7 to xxvii. 8	xxii. and xxiii.		
Legal procedure against the Christians	xxviii. 1–4	ii.		
The charge of ass-worship and the retort.	xxviii. 7–8. Cf. ix. 3	xvi. 1–5	i. 11	
Egyptian deification of Serapis.	xxix. 4		ii. 8	
The Imperial cult.	xxix. 5	xxviii. 3; xxxii. 2	i. 10	
The staurolatria of the Roman camp.	xxix. 6–8	xvi. 6–8	i. 12	
Barbarian human sacrifices.	xxx. 3, 4	ix.		*de Rep.* III. ix. 15
Secret crimes alleged against the Christians, and refutation thereof:				
(*a*) Infanticide and incest.	ix. 5–7	vii. 1; viii. 2, 3, 7		
(*b*) Refutation of infanticide.	xxx. 1	viii. 5		
(*c*) Heathen strangulation of infants retorted.	xxx. 2	ix. 7		
(*d*) Prevention of birth	xxx. 2	ix. 8		
(*e*) Rites of Jupiter Latiaris.	xxx. 4	ix. 5		
(*f*) Distinction between homicide and the drinking of blood.	xxx. 6	ix. 8, 9		
(*g*) The evil inspiration of Jupiter.	xxx. 5	ix. 16		
Persian morals and Ctesias.	xxxi. 3	ix. 7	i. 16	
Exposure of infants a social danger.	xxxi. 4	ix. 17	i. 16	
Christians are 'factiosi.'	xxxi. 6; viii. 3	xxxviii., xxxix.		
Christian innocence and pure ethic.	xxxi. and xxxii. *passim*	xxxix.		

	Minucius	Tertullian *Apology*	Tertullian *ad Nat.*	Cicero
Christians as brethren.	xxxi. 8	xxxvii. 1 ; xxxix. 14–21		
Death and the resurrection.	xxxiv. 9, 11	xlviii.		
Laberius and metempsychosis.	xxxiv. 7	xlviii.		
Everlasting hell-fire compared with that of lightning and volcanoes.	xxxv. 3. Cf. xi. 5	xlviii.		
Persecution as a corrective trial.	xxxvi. 3–9	xli.		
On the martyrs.	xxxvii. 1–6	l.		
Christian abstention from the shows.	xxxvii. 11	xxxviii. 4. Cf. *de Spectac.*		
Immoralities of the stage.	xxxvii. 11	xxxviii. 4. Cf. xv.		

For the purpose of clearer illustration four degrees of comparison in some of the above parallel passages may conveniently be adopted: (*a*) the simple comparison between *Octavius* and the *Apologeticus* only, (*b*) the triple comparison with the addition of Latin sources, (*c*) the triple comparison including the *ad Nationes* of Tertullian, and (*d*) the quadruple comparison between the *Octavius*, *Apologeticus*, the *ad Nationes*, and the books of Cicero.

(*a*) The simple comparison. E. de Muralto in his Zürich editions of Minucius in 1836 set forth nine arguments in his ' commentatio ' prefixed thereto for the priority of Minucius, but the adequate expression of such comparisons was lacking until Adolf Ebert published in 1868 his *Tertullians Verhältniss zu Minucius Felix* at Leipzig, which was reprinted in 1870 in *Abhandlungen d. phil.-hist. Class. d. Kön. sächs. Gesells. d. Wiss.* V. pp. 321–386. Ebert (p. 321) says that he is going to deal with the disputed but much neglected point, viz. which author must begin the history of Latin Christian literature. The solution of the question whether

Tertullian or Minucius is the elder, still left undecided, requires varied and considerable proofs. Thereupon Ebert, with the greatest possible care, proceeds to examine minutely first the plan of the *Octavius* and of the *Apologeticus*, and then the parallel passages in detail. In the first part of his work it is Ebert's object to show, by means of penetrating analysis, how fundamentally different the plan of composition is in the two apologies, and he begins by summarising the contents of the *Octavius*, putting the Pagan attack and the Christian reply side by side (322–340). He is struck by the perfection of its form, the order of the defence exactly tracing that of the attack, gaps and digressions being avoided and the essential unity of the whole being preserved, all obviously the result of much deliberately methodical thought. Its character is philosophical not ecclesiastical, and it gives the impression of being composed in quiet. The analysis of the *Apologeticus* follows (342–348). He remarks that the centre of gravity of the defence proper lies in the refutation of the alleged open, public or political crimes of the Christians, to which the greater part of the work is devoted, only three chapters being given to the supposed secret offences. In character the *Apologeticus* is entirely juridical, addressed to the supreme court of appeal, sketched in haste and passion in the needs of the moment. Therefore the composition of the two apologies is entirely different and even contradictory. Which is the more probable, that the philosopher used the pamphlet of the advocate, or *vice versa*? Is the composition of a treatise like the *Octavius* more likely to be soon after than before that of Tertullian, which is a cry of despair and rage? A more searching examination of the structure of the *Apologeticus* (p. 353 ff.) reveals to Ebert evidences of imperfection which are only explicable by reference to the *Octavius*. There are passages in the *Apologeticus* which show indications of having been incorporated from some other book, and that source is the *Octavius*. Such are those on the causes of Rome's greatness (*Oct.* xxv. 1–6; *Apol.* xxv. 2–17 and xxvi.), and on the Demons (*Oct.* xxvi. 7 to xxvii. 8; *Apol.* xxii. and xxiii.). In the *Octavius* the development of thought is entirely dependent on and in correspondence

with the context, being so self-sufficient as to make it impossible to prove that Minucius has gone to Tertullian, but in the *Apologeticus* the reverse is the case. Other instances of the incoherence of the plan of the *Apologeticus*, only intelligible with the assistance of the *Octavius*, are the loose way in which Tertullian appends his section about the philosophers (xlvi.–xlviii., after having said that he has completed his defence, xlvi. 1, whereas the *Octavius* is wholly and homogeneously philosophical), and the placing of Cybele before Jupiter among the chief foreign deities of Rome (*Apol.* xxv.), which can only be accounted for by his eye having happened to catch the mention of 'the Idaean mother' in the list given by Minucius (xxv. 9). Moreover, Tertullian's dependence on Minucius is also shown by identical turnings in the argument. After the derision of the Pagan images in the *Octavius* the action immediately passes on to the exposure of the absurdities of the Pagan sacred rites: 'Quorum ritus si persenseas' (xxii. 8), which theme he fully develops. Tertullian (xii.) also treats the images after the same fashion, and after a short digression (xiii.) proceeds 'volo et ritus vestros recensere' (xiv. 1), but he does not, in fact, review the heathen ceremonies at all. He has adopted the cue but neglected to go on with the piece. Unless the development omitted by Tertullian were found in Minucius, the contradictory words of Tertullian would remain a perfect puzzle. Here we would add a few remarks.

The action of *Apol.* xiv. is said to require 'nolo' (instead of 'volo') which is found in one MS. and which, since Haverkamp's edition (1718), has generally been adopted. But this emendation of the text only substitutes another difficulty. Why does Tertullian, then, refuse to review the heathen rites, unless he has seen the account in Minucius, and has decided to reject this part of the Christian reply in favour of at once attacking the mythology of heathen literature? Even if 'nolo' is read, the opening words of *Apol.* xiv. 1 still retain their connexion with *Oct.* xxii. 8. Is not this a natural explanation, that Tertullian at first thought of following *Oct.* xxii. 8, but for some reason not liking it well

enough, allowed his eye to run on until he found Minucius dealing with heathen literature in c. xxiv., to which he was strongly attracted? So, whether he had already written ' volo ' or ' nolo,' he contented himself with one fling at the paltry sacrifices of the heathen and immediately passed over to the more destructive assault on the myths? If this is true, we have an instance here of hasty borrowing in which the plagiarist has failed to cover up his tracks.

We shall not at this moment follow Ebert in his verbal comparisons. Suffice it to say that he finds Minucius to be a bold originator who supplied Tertullian with some of his best ideas. The effect of Ebert's work was to win for him a general agreement, especially in Germany, which was not seriously disturbed until Heinze, forty years later, adopted and amplified his method in favour of Tertullian. What Ebert's opponents said is fully expressed by Massebieau, who describes Ebert's hypothesis as an obsession more detrimental than useful to the intelligence. He and his followers are seduced by the beautiful proportions and clearness of the treatise of Minucius, says the French *savant*, with the result that they do not sufficiently notice the labour expended upon it by the author, in order to furnish the pleasure of easy reading. Tertullian is no more obscure in his *Apologeticus* than in his other works. It arises from a too luxuriant and compressed argument, from a superabundant erudition, from an affectation of archaism. What happened was that Minucius merely cleared up such obscurities in Tertullian at his leisure. Massebieau is too severe. Yet it must be admitted that the first part of Ebert's thesis alleging incoherence of composition against the *Apologeticus* is only too easily turned upon the *Octavius*. But the solid part of his detailed comparisons of the text remains, and at least establishes the fact that one of the two authors had the work of the other before his eyes.

The most destructive of the earlier critics of Ebert was Massebieau (*op. cit.*) in 1887, and Heinze's more recent work presses the arguments of Massebieau, in a different framework, to their bitter end. The method of literary comparison employed by Ebert was adopted by Massebieau

with the object of producing the opposite result. In his opinion Minucius borrowed as much from Tertullian as he did from Cicero, and eleven classes of excerpted material are enumerated by him, viz. long or short developments of characteristic form, citations, reflections, traits, eloquent movements, bitter or ironic railleries, simple pleasantries, metaphors, a multitude of phrases, expressions twisted from their sense, and singular words. They chiefly occur after the Pagan speech and the earlier part of the Christian reply when Minucius comes to the idea of the immensity of God, and Cicero who has served him hitherto now fails him. Therefore he goes to Tertullian, especially for the idea of the testimony of the soul to the Unity of God. For his Euhemeristic development on the Pagan gods Minucius returns again to Cicero, but on Saturn as an ancient king of Latium Cicero had not spoken, so the gap is filled by a passage whose essentials are taken from the *Apologeticus*. But it is when the Christian speaker proceeds to the scandalous charges against the Christians, and to the detailed justification of their conduct, that the indubitable agreements with Tertullian are multiplied in a striking manner. Massebieau asks, is it not reasonable to think that if Minucius went to Cicero for the philosophical part of his book, he had recourse to Tertullian for the Christian portion? Reasons taken from the general literary behaviour of Minucius and Tertullian support an answer in the affirmative. Minucius hides himself behind the characters of his dialogue, while Tertullian speaks personally and forcefully; Minucius uses Pagan authors in a way which makes us see them in a kind of half-light, he hides behind them, but Tertullian boldly cites them [1]; Minucius takes from other authors their images and ideas, and clothes them in a form hard to discern, which is not the case with Tertullian. Massebieau thought that Ebert had been haunted by an obsession, but he is himself possessed with one, that Minucius drew his philosophy from Cicero, his morality from Seneca, and therefore he must have obtained his Christianity from Tertullian.

[1] Massebieau is too sanguine. Tert. often does not cite his authorities, nor does he strike us as being any bolder in the use of them.

Deprived of all originality, Minucius cannot have written anything that is not capable of being tracked down to its source.

Monceaux (*op. cit.*) in 1901 followed on the heels of Massebieau. He held that whether the borrowed matter in the extensive number of parallel passages is direct or only under the influence of the original, it goes very often almost to plagiarism. The agreements cannot be explained by the hypothesis of a common source but only by direct imitation.[1] Five purely literary reasons decided him in favour of the priority of Tertullian. (1) Tertullian is a strong, creative, resourceful genius, who has in other works given proofs of originality and invention. Though scholarly and elegant, Minucius is, on the contrary, a man of second-rate talent, a clever compiler. He imitates Cicero for the plan of his dialogue, and numerous authors for details of style. We only find in him the commonplaces of Christian apologetics, without one idea truly original and personal. There is nothing in Minucius which is not also in Tertullian, while the converse is not true, the *Apologeticus* being twenty times richer in matter. Good logic would say that the poorer of two authors is the borrower. (2) Tertullian is a man of action, writing in the heat of his passionate temperament for action only. What he takes from other sources are facts for immediate argument, not copied phrases. Minucius is a witty lawyer, imitating everybody. His dialogue is not a book produced at the moment. It is a worked-over affair, a task of leisure for educated readers. (3) Tertullian, who has cited so many Pagan and Christian authors, could hardly have failed to name Minucius if he had written after him. This fact would be difficult to explain. Minucius cannot enjoy the return of the argument. He gives no hint of his obligations to Cicero for the form of his dialogue, and generally abstains from mentioning his sources. (4) If Tertullian has imitated

[1] Two examples may be cited, in support of Monceaux, of ideas not found in the early Apologies outside Min. and Tert.: (*a*) the cannibalism of the amphitheatre, since the people eat the flesh of beasts that have eaten human beings in the arena (Min. xxx. 6; *Apol.* ix.); and (*b*) the comparison of everlasting hell-fire with that of lightning and volcanoes (Min. xxxv. 3; *Apol.* xlviii.).

the *Oct.* in his *Apol.*, it is a miracle that he has not done so in other books. But if Minucius has imitated the *Apol.* only, this would not be surprising, since that was the only work of Tertullian which was widely spread outside Africa. (5) The common passages in Minucius are not in his style. The attacks against idolatry, the mordant railleries against the worship and morals of the Pagans, are altogether in the manner of Tertullian, and are in place in his vigorous satires. But they are not in place in Minucius, for they contrast with his elegance and grace, and they shock the proprieties by occurring in a conversation between friends. The last two arguments were adopted by Harnack and have already been dealt with in the previous chapter. What is at the back of the mind of Monceaux all the time is the belief that of two related authors the poorer is the borrower, as he says. What would become of many of the greatest literary reputations if this were true? The reader is left to supply examples.

Monceaux next proceeds to lead himself into a trap. There is nothing new in either of the speeches in the *Octavius*, and only the set-up of the work belongs to its author. The Pagan speech is derived from Cicero, and in what relates to the charges against the Christians, this is drawn from the Christian reply for the purpose of presenting it from the Pagan point of view. The Christian discourse is only in a great measure an adaptation, often almost a literal reproduction, of the *Apologeticus*. But it is a curious fact that Minucius has rejected all that was truly new and original in the *Apol.* and in a strict imitation has retained only banal ideas and commonplaces already familiar to all the Greek apologists of the second century, the impersonalities of apologetics. How can Monceaux explain, in face of such a final admission, why, if Minucius had the *Apologeticus* in his hands, did he go to all this trouble of picking out the antiquated platitudes, deliberately rejecting the new and cogent material which he supposedly must have found there? Nothing prevents the retort that it is more easily understood that Tertullian, perceiving that the commonplaces, as they appeared in Minucius, required some furbish-

ing up by means of the addition of more up-to-date ideas, proceeded to mould the old material into a form more to his liking. In a similar manner all five of the literary reasons of Monceaux, which he thought so final, can be turned with ease upon his thesis. A more thorough examination of the parallels between the *Oct.* and the *Apol.* appeared in an article by F. Ramorino.[1] Two principal reasons are adduced by him that Minucius is the imitator. (1) Minucius, in many of the common passages, only makes a sketch of a subject which Tertullian treats with fullness and originality, *e.g.* on the Cross, and on the number of criminals among the heathen. Either, then, Tertullian has developed the sketch of Minucius, or Minucius has summarised the development of Tertullian. The latter view is more natural and probable because Minucius is a rhetorical while Tertullian is a vigorous writer. There is nothing new here and it is not wholly true. Sometimes Minucius develops and Tertullian summarises, *e.g.* on the immoralities of the stage (*Oct.* xxxvii. 11 ; *Apol.* xxxviii.), in the addition of the worship of the 'sacerdotis genitalia' (ix. 4) to the list of secret crimes, found nowhere else, and on the manufacture of images (*Oct.* xxii. 4 ; *H.* xxiii. 12 ; *Apol.* xii.), the last of which Ramorino tries to explain away by referring what Minucius says to another source or by boldly asserting that in this case Minucius has amplified what he has taken from Tertullian. Nothing can be obtained out of this yet another 'hour-glass' argument. (2) In Minucius the ideas which are also found in Tertullian, although expressed in similar terms, are often displaced, or inexactly rendered, or exaggerated. Here Ramorino supplies an argument which seems to have misled Heinze into treating the *Octavius* as little better than a chaotic cento. The instances given by Ramorino of displacements in Minucius are not convincing, even though the same ideas are sometimes used in different arguments in the two authors. As regards inexactitudes, these would have to be glaring and serious if held to be significant. The alleged mistake in using the

[1] 'L'Apologetico di Tertulliano e l'Ottavio di Minucio' in *Atti del Congresso di Scienze Storiche*, vol. ii. pp. 143–178, Rome 1904.

word ' alibi ' (*Oct.* xxiv. 5 ; *H.* xxiii. 5), for example, is only apparent, not referring to Homer but to other poets. The ' in hoc ' (*Oct.* xxiv. 7 ; *H.* xxiii. 7) does not upset this, not meaning ' in Homer ' but ' for this object.' Neither can anything be built upon such an instance as the demon of Socrates who, says Minucius (xxvi. 9), guided that philosopher in rejecting or undertaking a matter, whereas Tertullian (xxii. 1) is more accurate in relating that the admonitions were dissuasive only. The exaggerations attributed to Minucius are imaginary. If, for example, he writes ' plerique ' it has with him the signification of ' multi.' Elsewhere the circumstances make it natural for him to speak as he does. In fact, as Waltzing says,[1] with regard to this second argument of Ramorino, one could as easily believe that Tertullian is the culprit, who puts an idea in another place, corrects inexactitudes, and modifies apparent exaggerations. Therefore Ramorino's two arguments cut both ways.

The most effective support of Harnack's thesis for the priority of Tertullian came not by a fuller elucidation or extension of his position, but by means of the very method of detailed comparison which he threw aside. This was the meritorious work of Richard Heinze, *Tertullians Apologeticum*.[2] The main object to which Heinze has addressed himself is to make a systematic, minute, and exhaustive analysis of the *Apologeticus* in order to display and demonstrate what he feels to be its essential originality, in its setting forth the Christian case from the legal side, in the fresh personal force with which it invigorates, develops, extends the old well-worn arguments, and in its logical perfection. But there is a secondary purpose which lies behind the first, and which, indeed, may well have suggested it, to furnish the final proof of the priority of Tertullian over Minucius. It is with this aspect of the treatise that most critics have been concerned. In the course of his analytical commentary on Tertullian, having reached the first section

[1] *Le Musée Belge*, 1906.

[2] In *Berichte d. K. sächs. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Leipzig, Phil.-hist. Kl.* 62 (1910), pp. 281–490.

of the ' refutatio ' on the ' facinora occulta ' (*Apol.* vii.–ix.), he thereupon begins seriously to compare (p. 330), in the extremely voluminous and learned notes which show such a wide knowledge of early ecclesiastical literature, the parallel matter of Minucius, in thirty-five instances, from *Oct.* ix. 5 to xxxviii. 5. A list of these passages is provided in a ' Stellenregister zu Minucius Felix ' at the end (p. 490). Consequently we have two works in one, an elucidation of the *Apologeticus* and a comparative criticism of the *Octavius*. The complete reply to Heinze would require the reversal of the process, with equal industriousness, but it will not be necessary to wait for the execution of such a task, as we shall see The method followed by him is that of Ebert, showing the difference in the composition of the two books in order to sustain the contrary thesis, reinforced by the extension of the procedure adopted by Massebieau, Monceaux, and Ramorino. In Heinze's opinion his predecessors have failed to reach decision because they have been content to compare particular passages or expressions without sufficient regard to the connexion of the whole. In essential unity of discourse, that is, in unity of conception, consistency in its execution, and in the connexion of the development of ideas, the *Apologeticus* is seen to be the original, while the obscurities and contradictions in the *Octavius* reveal the copy. To produce this result Heinze follows in every case the same sequence. Taking a section of the *Apologeticus*, he discusses and expounds it, finding it flawless and in correct logical position. Then he turns to Minucius, wherever there exists a correspondence, and having shown that herein occur the same ideas or arguments or even words, he compares the Minucian section with that of Tertullian. The comparison is all to the disfavour of Minucius. In him the ideas or arguments are not well or are less well placed, or else they contain expressions and points which are either displaced, or far-fetched, or even inexplicable. What, then, is the inevitable conclusion ? Minucius has been unable properly to place and explain the material which he has taken from Tertullian, and in his clumsiness has betrayed himself as the imitator. Heinze has dissected with microscopical

exactness the two books which he has compared, and for this all those who are interested in primitive ecclesiastical literature must be grateful. It is when he assembles again, in his own mind, the material that he has separated, that his invincible prejudice in favour of Tertullian asserts itself. Some little point that appears to him to jar, or to be blunted, some transition that displeases him, is quite enough to convince him that Minucius is the plagiarist. The fragments of the *Octavius* which lie before him can only, with him, be properly put together when placed according to the design and execution of the *Apologeticus*, which is perfection itself. He forgets, in his enthusiasm for Tertullian, that it is unreasonable to demand logical exactitude down to jots and tittles in a primitive Christian apology, but beyond this he is the victim of the same fatal obsession that beset Monceaux, the false assumption that the better of two related writers is always the older because the imitator is ever the inferior, for on this his whole argument is based. Suppose, for the sake of argument, it is conceded that Tertullian's literary genius is superior to that of Minucius, to what would such an axiom commit us? If, for instance, we were not sure on other grounds that Cyprian is posterior to Tertullian, it could be suggested that he was, in fact, anterior, since there has been flagrant imitation [1] without the slightest acknowledgment of obligation, and Cyprian is undoubtedly the greater man! Consequently Heinze's contribution to the controversy is not decisive and has only succeeded in placing more pointed weapons into the hands of the partisans of Minucius, who can retort that nothing but the analytical framework and energetic diction of the *Apologeticus* belong to Tertullian, who has borrowed the greater part of his material from the Greek apologists and Minucius, stamping it with such a vivid impression of his personality that the imitator reads as if he were the original.

From the foregoing short summary of the opinion of various critics on the simple comparison we can now pass to examples, of which two are selected for illustration, being the passages on the images and the secret crimes. The

[1] Cyprian called Tertullian his master; see Jerome, *de Vir. Illustr.* liii

fabrication of images out of common materials and their helplessness is the theme of Min. xxii. 1–4 (Halm, xxiii. 9–13); xxii. 6 (Halm, xxiv. 1), and Tert. *Apol.* xii. Minucius describes the whole process of the manufacture of an idol, how it is carved, cut, and planed.[1] Tertullian, on the other hand, conveys the particulars of fabrication in the form of a comparison with the heathen cruelties practised on the Christians. Minucius is by far the simpler and more coherent, but Tertullian is more pointed. Again, Minucius tells how the mice, swallows, hawks, and spiders behave towards the images with full detail, to which Tertullian only refers in passing, leaving the swallows out of the list. The natural inference would appear to be that Tertullian took the material from Minucius, converting and condensing it at great pains in order to increase effect. The second selected instance is the comparison of the way in which Min. and Tert. deal with the allegation of secret crimes. This is the first passage considered at length by Heinze (pp. 330–332) and will serve to illustrate his method. We shall take the details in order.

(1) The related passages are *Oct.* ix. 5–7, in which is an account of the supposed ritual murder of infants at the initiation of neophytes, and of the reported immorality at the Agapai, and *Apol.* vii. 1, where the charges of infanticide and of the incestuous banquets are merely referred to, and viii. 2, 3, 7, in which there is an ironical description of the same. Minucius, says Heinze, is more definite than Tertullian, (*a*) in stating that the child-sacrifice is an initiation rite; (*b*) in clearly distinguishing between the alleged crime at initiation, which is represented as being an essential ceremony of the cult, and the immorality at the banquets, which apparently has nothing to do with the cult itself; and (*c*) in giving only one version of the ritual murder, in which he shows how the novice was deceived. Heinze contents himself with these observations, and wisely, for if he had proceeded to draw an inference he would have had to contradict his thesis. The story told by Minucius is a unity understandable by itself, while that of Tertullian is broken

[1] Some Greek rationalist writer may have been his source who treated the subject similarly to Lucian in his *Somnium sive Gallus*.

up, confused, and only fully comprehensible in conjunction with Minucius. (2) The allegation of infanticide is refuted in *Oct.* xxx. 1, and *Apol.* viii. 5, 6. Heinze comments to the following effect. Minucius (xxx. 1), in his reply to the Pagan charge in ix. 5, does not seem to take into account the alleged deception of the novice, who does not know that a living infant is concealed under a crust of dough, while in Tertullian it is shown that to assume such ignorance is absurd and impossible (viii. 6). Instead, Minucius goes on to ask if anyone could make up his mind to murder such a tender creature, but he does not lay the strong stress upon the powerful appeal that the child's innocence and helplessness ought to make, as does Tertullian. The vivid clearness of the whole passage in Tertullian is, in Minucius, clouded over in the weak rhetorical question, ' Do you think it possible that so tender, so small a body could receive such fatal wounds, that anyone could slay the newly born on the very threshold of life, could shed and drink its young blood ? ' Heinze feels that the observation of Minucius, ' No one can believe this, unless he is himself capable of it,' is contradicted by him when it leads over to a list of the corresponding heathen atrocities, which practically agrees with that of Tertullian (c. ix.) ; that, furthermore, in the qualification, ' unless he is himself capable of it,' the deliberate guardedness of Minucius, where exact proofs cannot be produced, takes off the whole edge of his retorsion. In opposition to Heinze it can be urged that Tertullian does not give a connected account of the initiation rite, and only indirectly refers to the deception of the neophyte, in a manner out of place ; that he has, characteristically, sought to improve on what has been suggested to him by Minucius about the tenderness of the infant victim. In the retort upon the heathen, Minucius will not come out so badly nor Tertullian so well as Heinze imagines. Minucius has not said that no one is guilty of these crimes, but that unless a man were capable of slaying an infant himself he could not believe it of the Christians. Then, quite naturally, he goes on to show that the heathen have actually been guilty of infant sacrifices. The observation, ' unless he is himself capable

of it,' is not a cautious saving-clause, but a lead up to his proof that the heathens believe the charge because they have themselves committed the crime. How does Tertullian use this simple idea that an innocent person could not believe, but a guilty one could believe the slander? He plays with it (viii. 4, 5) to the top of his bent, turning it this way and that with masterly subtlety, making as much out of it as he can, but rather to the point of tedium than to the advantage of the action. (3) Minucius (xxx. 2) says: 'For I see that you . . . squeeze out the life of your new-born sons by means of strangulation, a wretched kind of death (misero mortis genere).' Heinze considers that the phrase 'misero mortis genere' has been taken from *Apol.* ix. 7: 'since there is a difference, too, in the kind of death (de genere necis), surely that is the more cruel method by which you squeeze out their breath under water (cf. *ad Nat.* i. 15: longiore morte), or expose them to cold and hunger and the dogs; for an adult would rather die by the sword.' The infanticide of unwanted children, though not a matter of cult, is yet equally heinous, and Tertullian wishes to show that the heathen are as deep in degree of guilt as they allege the Christians to be. Doubtless Heinze is right as to the intention of Tertullian, but there is no need to see anything out of place or derived in the perfectly natural remark of Minucius that strangulation is a 'miserable kind of death.' On the other hand it is easily comprehended how Tertullian could have developed his theme, as he does, from the comment of Minucius. (4) Minucius (xxx. 2) says there are women who 'medicaminibus epotis originem futuri hominis extinguant.' Upon this Heinze remarks that where it is a question of homicide the phrase 'futurus homo' is not a happy one, since such is not a 'homo' at all, and so homicide in this connexion is impossible. The objection that the destruction of the unborn is not murder is, however, foreseen by Tertullian, who says that 'prevention of birth is homicide in advance . . . one who is about to become a human being is already one (homo est et qui est futurus) just as every fruit exists in the seed' (ix. 8). But Heinze has not noticed that Minucius also sees the possible objection, and im-

mediately adds, 'and commit parricide before they are mothers.' Further, what is explicit in Tertullian's 'homo est et qui est futurus' is implicit in the 'homo futurus' of Minucius. One can imagine that Tertullian has not been satisfied with the bare phrase of Minucius, but thought to improve upon it by placing its significance beyond doubt or cavil. (5) Minucius retorts the charge of ritual murder upon the Romans, saying (xxx. 4) 'to this very day the cult of Jupiter Latiaris includes homicide, for, as suits the son of Saturn, he is fattened with the blood of a man who is a vile criminal (mali et noxii).' In the description 'who is a vile criminal' Heinze would see an unnecessary addition best understood by turning to *Apol.* ix. 5, where Tertullian speaks of Jupiter in his games being deluged with human blood: 'But, you say, (the blood) of a "bestiarius,"[1] and therefore, I suppose, of less moment than (the blood) of a man! But is it not worse because (the blood) of a bad man (mali hominis)?' Tertullian has met the possible objection that, after all, the blood shed in honour of Jupiter is only that of a beast-fighter and a bad man. According to Heinze, Minucius has omitted the reasoning of Tertullian but has retained the epithet 'mali hominis' in his 'mali et noxii hominis.' The reply is again obvious enough. When Minucius reports that Jupiter is worshipped by the shedding of a man's blood, and of a bad man at that, there is nothing, in itself, to suggest any want of spontaneity. On the other hand, it is at least equally conceivable that the acute mind of Tertullian saw the objection, 'yes; but the man in question has already been condemned to be torn to pieces by wild beasts,' and therefore met at once what Minucius had left untouched. (6) Heinze compares the remark of Minucius that Jupiter Latiaris 'taught' Catiline to enter into a conspiracy of blood, with that of Tertullian who (*Apol.* ix. 16) traces to Jupiter a different crime: 'Again, who are more incestuous than those whom Jupiter himself has taught?' This curious circumstance can only be explained by imitation. Here Heinze affords an example of the danger of a too exacting scrutiny. This

[1] *I.e.* a criminal condemned to the beasts.

slight resemblance can be accidental. It was the habit of the early apologists to blame the heathen gods for the inculcation of every evil deed. Even if there is anything in it, Minucius is no less apposite than Tertullian, and the comparison cancels out. (7) Heinze is impressed with the clearness with which Tertullian distinguishes between two crimes in his retort against the heathen on the charge of infanticide, those of homicide and drinking blood (*Apol.* ix. 8, 9). But why has not Heinze seen that Minucius is no less clear? For the latter (xxx. 6) is quite unmistakable: 'We are not permitted either to see or to hear of homicide, and such is our aversion to human blood, that in our food we avoid even the blood of edible creatures.'

What Heinze concludes, after examining the way in which Minucius and Tertullian have retorted the charge of cannibalism on the heathen, stands for his whole position, that (*a*) 'anyone who believes in the priority of Tertullian's text can easily explain the difficulties,' and that (*b*) 'Minucius has in a masterly manner used the work of Tertullian, occasionally adding to it new matter which he found handy.' But our examination of the foregoing seven counts does not lead to this result.

(*b*) The triple comparison with the addition of Latin sources. It was seen by Ebert that the closeness of the *Octavius* to Cicero's *de Natura Deorum* could be turned to account, although his argument that Minucius would not have used Tertullian as a model as well is untenable in the face of the obligations of Minucius to Seneca, who belonged to the opposite school to Cicero. Ebert was, however, much more sound in arguing that in the common passages the imitations of Cicero in Tertullian bear the mark of Minucius, so that Tertullian is clearly caught in a trap. His four examples of such passages are those on the causes of Roman greatness, the Pagan miracles, the oracular response to Pyrrhus, and the reply of Simonides to Hiero, all catalogued in our table above. Of these the second is the only correspondence which is not also in *ad Nat.*, and, as we shall see in the following chapter, Wilhelm refers it to the 'common source.' In 1870 F. Behr published a dissertation showing

the relationship of Minucius to Cicero's *de Natura Deorum*.[1] The impulse of these studies was sure to call attention to the advisability of deserting the apparently barren comparison of passages merely as they stand, for the development of that line of Ebert's reasoning which brought in the classical authors. Accordingly P. Schwenke [2] undertook to examine the two related apologies in connexion with passages from Cicero, Seneca, and Varro with the object of proving that Minucius approaches more nearly to them and that he served Tertullian as intermediary. This is how he states his method, which is more scientific than that of Ebert and Heinze. There are some passages in which either Min. or Tert. borrowed from the other where both have made use of Latin sources, reference to which will show which stands closer to the original and so lies at the foundation of the other (p. 266). Schwenke's arguments from the use of Varro are naturally not very convincing, but in regard to Cicero and Seneca he concludes that in choice of words and style Minucius has drawn from them directly, and Tertullian indirectly through Minucius. He supplies an independent argument also for the priority of Minucius, that as he has gone to the classical authors directly it is unlikely that he would have taken the trouble of doing so if he had had Tertullian before his eyes. Of his examples from Cicero there is one which Schwenke believes to be decisive (*de Rep.* III. ix. 15). On the subject of human sacrifices Cicero says : ' How many, such as the inhabitants of Taurica along the Euxine sea, as Busiris king of Egypt, as the Gauls and the Carthaginians, have thought it exceedingly pious and agreeable to the gods to sacrifice men ! ' Minucius (xxx. 3–4), after referring to child sacrifices in Africa to Saturn, adds that the Taurians of Pontus and the Egyptian (king) Busiris were wont to practise, as a religious observance, the sacrifice of their guests, and the Gauls the human or rather inhuman slaughter of victims in honour of Mercury.

[1] *Der Oct. des Min. Fel. in s. Verhält. zu Cic. Büch. de Nat. Deor.* Jena.

[2] In ' Über die Zeit des Min. Felix,' in *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.* ix. (1883), pp. 263–294.

Tertullian (*Apol.* ix.) gives some particulars of the African sacrifices of infants to Saturn, and mentions that among the Gauls adults were sacrificed to Mercury, adding ' I leave the Tauric tales to their own proper place, the theatres.' Schwenke argues that Minucius has obviously gone to Cicero, since after the Taurians he immediately gives the example of Busiris, following with that of the Gauls in the same order. Tertullian does not mention Busiris and puts the Taurians after the Gauls. His omission of Busiris, his departure from the order of Cicero's examples, and the manner of his reference to the Taurians show clearly that he has not gone directly to Cicero, but has made use of some medium. That medium was certainly the *Octavius*. Massebieau, however, in defence of the originality of Tertullian, explains the order of his examples from a reminiscence of Varro (in Aug. *de Civ. Dei*, vii. 9), who says that ' some, like the Carthaginians, immolate infants to Saturn, others, like the Gauls, sacrifice even men to him.' Thus Tertullian, like Varro, passes from the Carthaginians to the Gauls, and with him also sets in contrast the immolation of infants with that of men. This, to the mind of Massebieau, annuls the importance of Schwenke's argument. Tertullian had no need of either Minucius or Cicero. But there is an objection. Varro attributes the Gallic sacrifices to Saturn, while Tertullian and Minucius say that they were to Mercury. Here Massebieau takes refuge in a signal piece of special pleading. The reminiscence of Varro in Tertullian, he says, is light, and its prime significance consists in the antithesis set between the sacrifice of infants and that of men. The value of Tertullian's agreement with Varro on this point is not removed by his disagreement on the particular god. Massebieau is wrong. The disagreement nullifies the agreement. The Varronian comparison is valueless as the foundation of an argument. There still remains the example of the Taurians in Tertullian which is not in Varro. Even this, according to Massebieau, need not come from either Cicero or Minucius. It was inevitably part of the conventional list of such instances, and Tertullian refers to it in his own way. We reply that it is just the way in which Tertullian's refer-

ence to the Taurians comes in that gives rise to suspicion. He dismisses this thread-bare theme of actors with contempt and thereby shows that he has seen the Taurians in the list. It is as if he had the words of Minucius 'Tauris etiam Ponticis' before his eyes, had thought at first to reject this popular fable altogether, then to round off his catalogue added scornfully, 'Remitto Tauricas fabulas theatris suis.' Although Massebieau will not have it that Tertullian touches Cicero at all, he admits that Minucius has adopted the classification and order of Cicero except with regard to the Carthaginians whom, like Tertullian, he takes first. 'It is superfluous,' says he, 'to show with what ability of classification Minucius uses his borrowing.' We reply that Minucius, who was, as no one can seriously doubt, an African, had as much reason as Tertullian to mention the example from Africa at the beginning. Schwenke's argument therefore stands. However, Schwenke only opened out the field for other investigators like F. Kotek,[1] who tried to overset his thesis. Kotek classifies the harmonies between Cicero, Minucius and Tertullian under five heads according to subject. His conclusions are an exact contradiction of Schwenke. According to Kotek, Tertullian often imitates Cicero where Minucius does not, and where they both imitate Cicero they differ so much between themselves that the one cannot have been the intermediary of the other. He explains this difference by the way in which he believes the two apologists made use of Cicero. Minucius copies not only ideas but also words: he had the text of Cicero before him. But Tertullian only takes ideas, never words: he was consciously or unconsciously familiar with Ciceronian ideas and did not have the text before him as he wrote. Thus Kotek admits that Minucius went to Cicero directly, but denies that Tertullian has any dependence on him as regards Cicero.[2]

[1] *Anklänge an Ciceros 'de Nat. Deor.' bei Min. Fel. und Tert.* Progr. Wien, 1901.

[2] For a more general study on the relationship between Min. and the dialogues of Cicero see the article of O. Bottero, 'L'Oct. di Min. Fel. e le sue relazioni con la cultura classica' in *Rivista filosofica*, 1904. He gives priority to Min. Also for his view on the literary method of Min. in regard to Cicero see Massebieau (*op. cit.*).

(*c*) The triple comparison including the *ad Nationes* of Tertullian. The *ad Nationes* was composed in the same year as the *Apologeticus*, a few months earlier. Its plan is conventional, the first book being a refutation of heathen calumnies and an exposure of injustices against the Christians, while the second consists of a polemic against the heathen gods. It was addressed to the heathen public. Unfortunately we possess only a single and imperfect codex. As compared with the *Apologeticus* the text is rougher. Most critics believe that Tertullian used the *ad Nat.* for his later work which, although on a very different plan, is largely a development, intensification, or summary of it. In connexion with the *ad Nat.* Heinze makes an astonishing error. While admitting the importance of the fact that the original thoughts of Tertullian's *Apologeticus* must be looked for in the *ad Nat.* and that this must be borne in mind in establishing the relationship of Minucius (p. 284, 2), its importance, apparently, only lies in doubling the force of arguments for the originality of the *Apol.*, and not as an additional factor in the comparison, since, he adds, Minucius contains nothing in common with the *ad Nat.* that is not also in the *Apol.* Therefore he summarily dismisses the hypothesis that Tertullian made use of Minucius for the *ad Nat.*, materially extending and widening the argument, and afterwards redacted the *ad Nat.* for the *Apol.*, so that the Minucian features appear again, with the addition of a few from other sources, which (and here he makes a dangerous admission) might otherwise, though not necessarily, be true (p. 341, 1). With the assumption that Minucius has no independent contact with the *ad Nat.* in his mind, Heinze commits himself to the queer argument that the admission that the *ad Nat.* is prior to the *Apol.* decides the question of the priority of the *Apol.* to the *Oct.* Thus Hartel, Harnack, and others who have thought that Minucius polished up crudities in the *ad Nat.* are also wrong, if Heinze is right. But in truth he is quite deceived. Minucius and the *ad Nat.* agree quite independently in various places. Heinze must restate his priority theory and say that Minucius not only pillaged the *Apol.* but also took material from the

ad Nat. A few comparisons in which related material is found in the *Oct.* and the *ad Nat.*, entirely missing from the *Apol.*, will suffice in proof. Such are the mention of Erigone, *Oct.* xxiii. 7, *ad Nat.* ii. 15; of the burning of Hercules, *Oct.* xxiii. 7, *ad Nat.* ii. 14; of the fratricide of Romulus and the rape of the Sabine women, *Oct.* xxv. 2, 3, *ad Nat.* ii. 9; of the crowning of Homer, *Oct.* xxiv. 2 (xxiii. 2), *ad Nat.* ii. 7; of the dictum of Socrates, *Oct.* xiii. 1, *ad Nat.* ii. 2; of the unknown Gods, *Oct.* vi. 3, *ad Nat.* ii. 9; and of the Egyptian deification of Serapis, *Oct.* xxix. 4, *ad Nat.* ii. 8. Of this Harnack was well aware, and is compelled at least to admit that Minucius must have read the *ad Nat.* and have probably made extracts. That is enough. Even if it is conceded by Harnack that the *Oct.* is only connected with the *ad Nat.* 'in a very minor degree,' and the correspondences are only 'faint,' a small independent relation must bring in the *ad Nat.* as an important factor in the comparison. Turning now to the triple relationship between the *Oct.*, the *ad Nat.* and the *Apol.* the reader will find a number of places included in the table already provided in this chapter. For more he is directed to W. von Hartel, who has investigated the subject.[1] The most scientific and convincing contribution to the whole discussion is contained in the short treatise of J. G. F. Borleffs, which should be studied with great care.[2] The correspondences between the *Oct.*, the *Apol.* and the *ad Nat.* are complex, exhibiting evident traces of the compiler. Sometimes in the middle of a passage where the *Oct.* and the *Apol.* are nearer, a detail will appear in which the *Oct.* and the *ad Nat.* are closer. For instance, the whole of the exposure of the immoralities of the heathen in *Oct.* xxxi. 1–5, *Apol.* ix. 16–19, and *ad Nat.* i. 16 may be read. The *Oct.* and *Apol.* contain what is not in the *ad Nat.*, in the references to the incests of Jupiter and to Christian chastity, or differently expressed in the *ad Nat.*, as on the immorality of the Persians and the promiscuousness of heathen sexual

[1] See 'Patr. Stud.' 2. 'Zu Tert. Ad Nat.' in *Sitzungs. d. phil.-hist. Classe*, 121 (1890, Vienna), pp. 19–21.

[2] See *Le Musée Belge*, 1922, pp. 229–249, 'Quaeritur quae ratio intersit inter Min. Fel. Oct. et Apol. Tert.'

relations. Take in conjunction with this another point. In the *Oct.* some material is missing which is found both in the *Apol.* and the *ad Nat.*, the citation of Ctesias on the Persians, the instance of the Macedonians, the tragedy of Oedipus, and also what is in the *ad Nat.* alone, the dreadful case which came up when Fuscianus was prefect of Rome. What can be concluded from this? It must be confessed that Minucius could have obtained all his matter from the *Apol.* alone, and therefore it may be conjectured that he actually did so. But here comes an astonishing fact. If Minucius has imitated the *Apol.* to such an extent, yet he has strangely preferred to extract one sentence word for word from the *ad Nat.*, viz. 'alienae misericordiae exponitis,' which appears in the *Apol.* as 'exponitis suscipiendos ab aliqua praetereunte misericordia extranea.' This is the only thing he has taken from the *ad Nat.*, and it cannot be by accident. Consequently if Minucius has imitated the *Apol.* he has also used the *ad Nat.* But why did he not take the form of this sentence from the *Apol.* from which he has taken all the rest? Borleffs answers that Minucius was the pattern and Tertullian the imitator. Tertullian first for the *ad Nat.* extracted the matter from the *Oct.* for this part, using it freely, but retaining the words 'alienae misericordiae exponitis.' When he came to write the *Apol.* he felt that the *ad Nat.* was too full and tedious, so he contracted and sharpened his words, but also added something which suggested itself to him on a second reading of the *Oct.* Similarly on the existence under Providence of ancient empires, all that Minucius says (xxv. 12) could have been derived generally from *Apol.* xxvi. 1, but if so, then he deserts the order of nations enumerated there for that in *ad Nat.* ii. 17. Also in the *Oct.* and *Apol.* there is given a parallel list of ancient offices in the old Roman religion which both agree and remarkably differ in the orders referred to, but the form of the comparison is more distinct in the *Apol.* This mention of religious offices which are posterior to the *floruit* of the old empires does not occur in the *ad Nat.* Has Minucius adopted the general ideas of *Apol.* xxvi. 1, but altered the order of the list of nations to that of *ad Nat.*

ii. 17, and then gone back to the *Apol.* for the list of religious offices, only to change some of them ? Or could it be that Tertullian was the imitator, that he extracted the list of nations for the *ad Nat.* from Minucius, but when reading Minucius for the second time for the *Apol.* he altered the order of nations so as to bring out more clearly the contrast, which he now added, with the old Roman religious offices ? This Borleffs believes that he did, and that he betrays himself by a curious little detail. Tertullian seeing that there was in Minucius no particular nation to be selected for an offset to the Vestal Virgins mentioned there, wrote down one out of his own mind, the Amazons !

In support of this view two more triple comparisons may be argued. Related enumerations and citations are two classes of particularly useful comparisons. In such passages if, together with considerable agreement, there occur even slight variations suggesting a deliberate change, then whichever author appears to have the more comprehensible motive may fairly be suspected of imitation. Here is another example of the enumeration class. Either directly or indirectly King Juba is included in corresponding lists of national gods in *Oct.* xxi. 9, *Apol.* xxiv. 8 (cf. xix. 6) and *ad Nat.* ii. 8. The reference is to Juba II. who in 25 B.C. was given the kingdom of Mauretania in exchange for that of Numidia by Augustus. For half a century he ruled with distinction, gaining the hearts of his subjects and a considerable reputation for wisdom and learning, so that his name continued to remain a great power in his country long after his dynasty had ended. An inscription (*C.I.L.* 8, 20627, cf. 7, 9342) discovered in Morocco mentions Juba beside Jupiter and a Genius loci. Minucius and Tertullian and, following them, Cyprian and Lactantius refer to Juba's deification, an unusual thing in the Roman world apparently for one who was not an Emperor, but in the absence of any witness from Pagan writers, the inscription sufficiently confirms the fact. In the case of Numidia there was certainly a cult of deified kings, as epigraphic texts show, and this testifies to the African custom in this respect.[1]

[1] See J. Toutain, *Les cultes païens dans l'Empire romain*, III. i. (1917) p. 39.

Minucius, having proved the human origin of the gods, goes on to say: 'But perhaps you turn them into gods after their death, like Romulus on the perjury of Proculus, as Juba became a god by the will of the Moors, and as all the other deified kings who are decreed apotheosis in order to do honour to the excellence of their reigns rather than from any belief in their divinity.' Tertullian in the *Apol.* shows that the Christians alone are denied the adoration of their own God. The Romans allow it to the Egyptians, to each province and to each city. 'Each province, each city has a god for itself, and so Syria has its Atargatis, Arabia its Dusares, Norica its Belenus, Africa its Coelestis, and Mauretania its kinglets (reguli).' In the *ad Nat.* on the national gods he says that unlike the True God they are not known beyond the limits of their own countries. 'How many recognise by sight or sound Atargatis of the Syrians, Coelestis of the Africans, Varsutina of the Moors, Obodan and Dusares of the Arabs, Belenus of the Noricans . . .?' Compare *Apol.* xix. 6, where Tertullian sarcastically cites King Juba along with Apion and Thallus as an historical authority. Why has Tertullian, after having written down in his list in the *ad Nat.* the deity 'Varsutina of the Moors,' exchanged for it in the *Apol.* the words 'and Mauretania its kinglets'? T. Reinach [1] answers because he has found in Minucius that a king of Mauretania has been deified. The case may be argued thus. Both Minucius and Tertullian have in their mind national gods although they are speaking of them in a different connexion, but while Minucius in reference to the Moors speaks of the cult of Juba alone, Tertullian first instances Varsutina and alters this to a generalisation of the Moorish kings. Suppose that Minucius is the compiler. He wishes to expound his Euhemeristic argument. If he has seen the mention of Varsutina he passes it by and fastens on the instance of the Moorish kings. However, he does not appreciate the strength of this generalisation for his argument, but prefers to give one instance only, that of Juba. Now suppose that the imitator is Tertullian. He

[1] *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 1921, pp. 59–68, article 'Min. Fel. et Tert.'

has put down 'Varsutina of the Moors' among his provincial deities in the *ad Nat.*, but when rewriting the list for the *Apol.* the memory of the mention of King Juba in Minucius comes into mind, but he does not write down Juba alone, as he naturally might have done. Instead he feels that he can point the scorn of his sentence by rounding it off with 'ut Mauretaniae reguli sui.' That he must have included Juba among these 'reguli' is obvious from *Apol.* xix. 6, and, besides, Tertullian was an African. If we are satisfied that there is a relationship between the three passages, all the more significant because less obtrusive, which process has the greater probability? We think the latter. And to this may be added that the coherence of Minucius is perfect. He has mentioned Romulus, the ancient Roman king, and as a native of Numidia himself he supplies a modern example of the apotheosis of one who had once been a king of his own country. Waltzing lends his great authority in support of the argument from the Juba case. He thinks it admits of no other explanation than that Tertullian was the imitator, and to be unassailable. We have, he says, the right to explain the other cases in the light of this.[1]

Allusion has been made to the value of citations. For the history of Saturn four authorities, and these the same, are cited by both our authors, but with a puzzling detail in respect of one of them by Tertullian. Upon this has been erected what is known as the 'Saturn case.' Ebert (*op. cit.* pp. 369–372) thought it so striking and serious an example that it may be said to be his basic argument. The whole section dealing with the proof that Saturn, the father of the line of gods, was a man, in both authors, belongs, says Ebert, to the class of those longer passages which should be given prominent examination, in which there appears in Minucius clearer investigation and a surer course of argument, and in Tertullian a direct contrary to these qualities, together with other grounds against Tertullian's originality. But others have arrived at an opposite conclusion to Ebert, and

[1] See his perspicacious review of Reinach's article in *Le Musée Belge*, 1921, pp. 189–196

it is probably this particular comparison, which has received the greatest prominence of all with the critics, that was in Harnack's mind when he said that such arguments on both sides were as convertible as the sand in an hour-glass. Whether the four authors cited in support of the Euhemeristic tradition, that Saturn was a king of Cretan origin exiled in Italy, came originally from Varro's *Rerum Divinarun Libri* or not, does not affect the discussion in any vital way. We shall put the case for both sides, and, as a preliminary, set down the related texts in English, with the Latin where required.

Min. xxi. 4. ' That Saturn, the head of this swarming race, was a man, all the Greek and Roman writers of antiquity (omnes scriptores vetustatis Graeci Romanique) have recorded. Nepos and Cassius in their history are aware of this, and Thallus and Diodorus speak in the same manner (Scit hoc Nepos et Cassius in historia, et Thallus ac Diodorus hoc loquuntur). 5. And so this Saturn, a refugee from Crete in fear of his son's rage, reached Italy, where he was hospitably received by Janus. Accomplished in Greek civilisation, he taught those ignorant rustics many things, such as forming letters, stamping coinage, and the manufacture of implements. 6. Consequently he desired that his retreat where he had safely hidden should be called Latium, and both he and Janus have left a souvenir to posterity, the one giving his own name to the city Saturnia, and the other to the Janiculum. 7. Assuredly, then, it was a man who fled and was in hiding : he was the father of a man and the son of a man (Homo igitur utique qui fugit, homo utique qui latuit, et pater hominis et natus ex homine). He was only called son of Earth or son of Heaven because his parents had been unknown to the Italians, just as to this very day we say of those who appear unexpectedly that they are sent from heaven, and call the ignoble and obscure sons of Earth.'

Tert. *Apol.* x. ' You have no god anterior to Saturn : the whole list begins with him, even including mightier and more illustrious divinity. And so whatever shall be established about the source will stand about the succession.

Consequently, as far as literature teaches, neither Diodorus the Greek, nor Thallus, nor Cassius Severus, nor Cornelius Nepos, nor any other exponent of this class of antiquities, has set forth Saturn as aught else but a man (Saturnum itaque, si quantum litterae docent, neque Diodorus Graecus, aut Thallus, neque Cassius Severus, aut Cornelius Nepos, neque ullus commentator eiuscemodi antiquitatum aliud quam hominem promulgaverunt). So far as the evidence of facts goes, nowhere do I find any more trustworthy than in Italy itself, where, after many enterprises, and after enjoying the hospitality of Attica, Saturn settled, having been received by Janus, or Janes, as the Salii prefer to call him. The mountain where he lived was called Saturnius, the settlement which he staked out is even to this day Saturnia ; in fact the whole of Italy, after being Oenotria, was denominated Saturnia. He first introduced writing-tablets, and a stamped coinage, for which reason he presides over the treasury. Yet if Saturn was a man, surely he sprang from a man ; and since he came into being by a man, he certainly cannot be from Heaven and Earth (Tamen si homo Saturnus, utique ex homine, et quia ab homine, non utique de Coelo et Terra). But it easily came about that he, whose parents were unknown, was called the son of those whose children we can all likewise appear to be. For who may not call Heaven and Earth father and mother for reverence and honour's sake, or in conformity with natural custom, according to which, unknown persons or those appearing unexpectedly are said to have dropped from Heaven ? In this way it came about that Saturn was called celestial because he appeared everywhere suddenly. For those whose race is uncertain the generality calls sons of Earth. I say nothing about the men of those days being so ignorant that the sight of any strange hero impressed itself on them as divine, because, accomplished as they are at the present day, they make into gods those whom they have admitted a few days before by a public mourning to be dead.'

Tert. *ad Nat.* ii. 12 (text imperfect). He begins by saying that he will show that all the gods were men by

commencing with Saturn the source of the gods, said to be derived from Heaven and Earth. After having ridiculed the idea of sexual qualities being attached to the latter, and the suggestion that the whole myth of Saturn represents Time, he proceeds to the proof that Saturn was undoubtedly a man. ' The origin of Saturn is evident everywhere in your literature ; we read it in Cassius Severus, in the Cornelii Nepos and Tacitus, among the Greeks also in Diodorus, and in other hoary compilers of antiquities (Exstat apud litteras vestras usquequaque Saturni census, legimus apud Cassium Severum, apud Cornelios Nepotem et Tacitum, apud Graecos quoque Diodorum, quive alii antiquitatum canos collegerunt). There are no surer traces than those found in Italy. For after (traversing) many countries, and (enjoying) the hospitality of Attica, he settled in Italy, or, as it was then called, Oenotria, having been received by Janus or Janes as the Salii call him. The hill on which he settled was named Saturnius, the city which he staked out still bears the name Saturnia, and indeed the whole of Italy once had the same designation. Such is the testimony derived from that country which is now the mistress of the world. Whatever doubt may exist about the origin of Saturn, his actions tell us plainly that he was a man. Thus if Saturn was a man, there can be little doubt that he was sprung from (a man), and, further, since he was a man, certainly he came not of Heaven and Earth (Ita si homo Saturnus, procul dubio de [homine], imo quia homo, non utique de coelo atque terra). But he whose parents were unknown could easily enough be called the son of those (elements) from which all might be said to spring. Who may not call Heaven and Earth father and mother out of reverence for them ? or in conformity with natural custom according to which any persons who appear unexpectedly are said to have come from Heaven ? Hence it happened that because a stranger appeared suddenly everywhere the custom arose of calling him a heaven-born man, just as those whose race is uncertain are commonly represented to be sons of Earth.'

With these extracts may also be compared Lactantius,

Inst. Div. I. xiii. 8 : ' Therefore not only all the poets, but also the writers of histories and antiquities, who have commemorated his exploits in Italy, agree that he was a man, among the Greeks Diodorus and Thallus, and of the Latins Nepos and Cassius and Varro (Graeci Diodorus, et Thallus : Latini, Nepos et Cassius, et Varro).'

Of these four epitomisers of Roman history two are certainly of the Augustan age. Cornelius Nepos wrote three books of Chronicles now lost, and Diodorus of Sicily composed forty books of his ' Historical Library ' from the earliest times down to Caesar's Gallic war. The period of Thallus is not so clear. If the text of Eusebius (*Chronicorum* i. 41) is right, the three books of *Memoriae* written by Thallus only went as far as 112 B.C., but it has been thought that this should be A.D. 49. If so, it is quite possible that Thallus was the Samaritan freedman of Tiberius mentioned by Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* XVIII. vi. 4). As if he had not been so sure about Thallus, Tertullian in the *ad Nat.* leaves him out and substitutes Tacitus (*Hist.* v. ii. 4). But who was Cassius, cited by Minucius as a well-known historian (' Cassius in historia ') ? Tertullian twice says that he was Cassius Severus. In doing so, perhaps influenced by the citation of two Augustans, he has made a bad blunder. This orator and satirist, banished by Tiberius for libellous lampoons, although he may have also written on grammar and painting, was not an historian as well. We must look for some other Cassius. Eusebius in his *Chronicorum* i. 41 (Migne, *P.G.* xix. 267–8), when giving authorities for Roman kings and consuls, mentions Cassius Longinus together with Diodorus and Thallus. Longinus the Greek historian flourished in the second century A.D., and was the author of eighteen books of Roman history up to the accession of Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138). Was this the man ? The impression given by Minucius and Tertullian is that Cassius was a Latin writer, and Lactantius seems to clinch the matter. Search then must be made for a Cassius who wrote in Latin, and the ancient annalist L. Cassius Hemina, who wrote about 140 B.C. a history of Rome to the end of the third Punic war, seems best to fit the part.

In an adequate comparison the whole Saturn passage in which the citation of the four authors occurs must be taken into account. Heinze (pp. 341–343) maintains that the argument of Minucius is not a unity. For the philosophic evidence that the gods were originally men Minucius, he says, compiles inaccurately from Cicero. Passing to historical proofs for the first deification from which all subsequent deifications sprang, Minucius cites the spurious letter of Alexander the Great, who was neither ' historicus ' nor ' sapiens,' although (xxi. 1) he has said that this is the kind of authority which he is calling in. According to the letter a priest had revealed the secret of men-made gods, Vulcan being supreme and the family of Jupiter coming next. Minucius therefore brings forward evidence that Vulcan was the oldest of the gods. But in the next line he strongly contradicts this, for he immediately goes on to say ' That Saturn, the head of this swarming race, was a man, all the Greek and Roman writers of antiquity have recorded,' although upon the correctness of the tradition as to which was really the first of the gods depends all the argument which Minucius proceeds to give about Saturn, and in course of which he cites the authority of the four historians. Further, in associating, as he does, the authority of philosophers, who look at things from a theoretical point of view, with that of historians, who only deal with fact, he is bringing together testimony which is not of a homogeneous kind. The Saturn proof for the deification of men can only have sense if emphasis is laid upon one detail of statement, as in Tertullian, *Apol.* x., where there is no reference to philosophic opinions nor to Alexander's letter, but the argument is proceeded with directly from the statement : ' You have no god anterior to Saturn.' Heinze's objections have not been perceived by many great scholars, whose views are best expressed by Ebert who says (p. 370) that ' the line of thought of Minucius is so plain and clear that nowhere does he exhibit the slightest blunder.' Minucius relates the traditional history of Saturn, which shows that he was merely a man, leading up to the climax that the man who fled and hid himself could not be the son of a god or the

father of a god. Then, having completed this part of the proof, he passes on to explain naturally how the myth originated that Saturn was the son of Heaven and Earth. Ebert does not touch upon Alexander's letter or the philosophic testimony. But in fact it is only the former that comes in awkwardly, and even this can be explained as being included from the traditional store of Christian apologetic as a concession to Christian readers. Those who believe that Minucius imitated Tertullian produce two theories to account for his avoidance of adding Severus to the name of Cassius. He did not know that Tertullian had made an error but was only anxious to obtain 'concinnitas,' so he wrote the four names down in two symmetrical groups, two Latins 'Nepos et Cassius,' and two Greeks 'Thallus ac Diodorus,' giving one name to each, which required the sacrifice of the surname 'Severus.' In answer it may be said that while Minucius did aim at symmetry he need not have been ignorant of the identity of Cassius, and in fact he does add a note of precision 'in historia.' The second contention is that Minucius, seeing the mistake in Tertullian, simply left the surname out. This might hold if there had been a clear case of deliberate omission, but there is not. Minucius gives one name to Cassius as he does to the other three authors.

Ebert attacks the unity of Tertullian's argument. Tertullian, he says, in his line of thought, traverses the same ground as Minucius, but he carries his proof to a point beyond the human origin of Saturn to the climax that being a man he could not be the son of Heaven and Earth: 'Tamen si homo Saturnus, utique . . . non utique de Coelo et Terra.' Therefore in Tertullian the whole deduction obtains probability much rather in such degree as the question is concerning the direct descent of Saturn from Heaven and Earth than whether he was a man. On this conception Tertullian works with the 'utique,' which is consequently as much out of place in him as it is rightly in place in Minucius. And so, Tertullian having gone on too far, and now forced to explain himself, welds on a reconstruction of the explanation of Minucius about the origin of the

myth that Saturn was the son of Heaven and Earth, but only succeeds in entangling himself in a contradiction by interposing an explanation of his own that any man could call Heaven and Earth his parents from the motive of reverence and respect, and ending up with the opposite hypothesis that people call those whose race is uncertain sons of Earth, which in Minucius is more accurately said of the ignoble and obscure. Heinze, with this criticism in view, takes the opposite side (*vide* pp. 341–3). The first draft of Tertullian's Saturn argument is in *ad Nat.* ii. 12, where the allusion to the four historical authorities is better understood than in *Apol.* x. Tertullian in *ad Nat.* demonstrates the complete absurdity of Saturn's descent from Heaven and Earth. Then he shows that the identification of Saturn with Chronos is impossible. Saturn cannot be both. He must be the one or the other. Having disposed of Saturn's allegorical representation as 'Time,' Tertullian proceeds to prove from the records of historians of Saturn's earthly life that he was undoubtedly a man. After this he shows how the fable that Saturn was the son of Heaven and Earth came into existence from natural causes. The Italians did not know who his parents were, and as anyone could be called the son of Heaven and Earth out of reverence, they spoke of Saturn in this way. Besides, the unexpected are generally referred to as coming from Heaven, and it is common to say that those whose race is uncertain are sons of Earth. Tertullian in *Apol.* x., concerning the descent of Saturn from Heaven and Earth, when going over the *ad Nat.*, omitted all about the absurdity of the conception, and the impossibility of his being Chronos as well, but, besides the testimony of the historians, retains the explanation of the origin of the myth. Heinze admits the abruptness of the appearance of this explanation of the fable in *Apol.* x., upon which Ebert (p. 370) bases his argument for the priority of Minucius, but maintains that it is accounted for by Tertullian's omissions in redacting the *ad Nat.* Minucius, in employing the matter in Tertullian's *Apol.*, has concealed the abruptness by smoothing it over. Heinze adds two reasons for the priority of Tertullian. If he had only

Minucius before him one is at a loss to understand how Tertullian could have come by all his material about Saturn in the *ad Nat.* Further, when Tertullian went over the *ad Nat.* for the *Apol.* he added precise details of Saturn's contributions to Italian civilisation, the introduction of 'tabulae' (*i.e.* legal records), and stamped money, hence, from the latter, presiding over the 'aerarium.' Thus he explains the origin of the name 'aerarium Saturni' just as he has done in the case of the 'Mons Saturnius.' Minucius has a similar passage, but in him it has become meaningless. The arts taught by Saturnus are 'litteras imprimere, nummos signare, instrumenta conficere.' He gives no explanation of the 'aerarium Saturni,' but substitutes the manufacture of implements, meaning those used in agriculture, *e.g.* the sickle, the 'Saturni dens.' Upon these views of Heinze one can only say that he has not relieved Tertullian of the suspicion of plagiarism by widening the field somewhat. An imitator can develop, attempt an improvement of the argument, or display erudition if he chooses.

Again returning to the citation of the four authors, the original in Tertullian must be in the *ad Nat.* Supposing that he had Minucius before him, here is a possible sequence. When Tertullian's eye first caught the name Nepos, the nomen Cornelius of the well-known historian would at once occur to him. He would say to himself 'Cornelius Nepos.' But which Cassius of all those possessing that common nomen was intended by Minucius? There was a notorious author of that name known to him probably from his oratorical studies with the cognomen 'Severus.' This must be the man. But who was Thallus? This personage was too obscure. However, Tacitus had written about Saturn and would be a surer reference. And he was Cornelius too. All these three names would seem more precise if given more fully. Therefore Tertullian boldly writes, 'We read in Cassius Severus, in the Cornelii Nepos and Tacitus.' Thus the inconsistency of Minucius in setting down the cognomen only of Nepos and the nomen only of Cassius constituted a trap into which Tertullian fell, and a trifling alteration gives away the borrower. Continuing our supposition,

Tertullian again consulted Minucius for the *Apologeticus*. He observes that Minucius has called ' omnes scriptores vetustatis Graeci Romanique ' to witness, but has not cited them in that order. Therefore he reverses it and indicates the order by adding the unnecessary ' Graecus ' to Diodorus. He cannot now retain Tacitus, but he has found out in the meantime that Thallus was an ancient historian, perhaps from Theophilus, *ad Autolycum*, iii. 29, for in *Apol.* xix. 6, where Tertullian mentions Thallus as an archaeologist, there is interpolated in the Fuldensian Fragment [1] a passage running, ' For according to the history of Thallus, in which is related the war of the Assyrians, and how Saturn, the king of the Titans, fought with Jupiter . . . ,' which in Theophilus appears as ' for Thallus mentioned Belus king of the Assyrians, and Saturn son of Titan, alleging that Belus with the Titans made war against Jupiter. . . .' Therefore Tertullian restores Thallus to the list and expunges Tacitus. But he still follows the *ad Nat.* in writing ' Cassius Severus ' and ' Cornelius Nepos,' since none of his chronological studies have led him to suspect the cognomen ' Severus.' We put this forward as our own hypothesis for what it is worth. There are many who cannot believe that Tertullian blundered through imitation. Monceaux, for example, thinks that he was too learned and conscientious. However, notwithstanding his erudition, he was careless in historical statements, as when he confounds the Sophist Hippias (*Apol.* xlvi.) with the son of Pisistratus, which is distinctly bad. Another conjecture of Monceaux is still less convincing. The fault is due to some copyist who, wishing to make the nomen Cassius more definite, added the cognomen of the only Cassius he knew. But the same mistake in the *ad Nat.* prohibits the theory of interpolation in the *Apol.*, since its text has come down by a quite different MS. tradition, unless we are to believe that two quite independent copyists interpolated the same blunder. In the last resort the partisans of Tertullian have brought out a supposed common source which was the real culprit. If, then, such

[1] The Fuldensian Fragment belongs either to a first draft or to a second edition of the *Apology*.

was the case, it is incomprehensible why Minucius and Lactantius did not fall into the same error. After an examination of the briefs on both sides on the 'Saturn Case' we feel, for our part, that a verdict in favour of Tertullian would be fighting against the truth.

(*d*) The quadruple comparison between the *Oct.*, *Apol.*, *ad Nat.*, and the books of Cicero. We shall conclude this study of inter-relationship by bringing forward two examples.[1] The first concerns the story of Simonides, the lyric poet, and Hiero, the despot of Syracuse. The four passages are as follows. Min. xiii. 4 : 'Quid ? Simonidis melici nonne admiranda omnibus et sectanda cunctatio ? Qui Simonides, cum de eo, quid et quales arbitraretur deos, ab Hierone tyranno quaereretur, primo deliberationi diem petiit, postridie biduum prorogavit, mox alterum tantum admonitus adiunxit. Postremo cum causas tantae morae tyrannus inquireret, respondit ille, "quod sibi, quanto inquisitio tardior pergeret, tanto veritas fieret obscurior." '

Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* I. xxii. 60 : Cotta the Academician says : 'Roges me, quid aut quale sit deus, auctore utar Simonide, de quo cum quaesivisset hoc idem tyrannus Hiero, deliberandi sibi unum diem postulavit ; cum idem ex eo postridie quaereret, biduum petivit ; cum saepius duplicaret numerum dierum admiransque Hiero requireret cur ita faceret "quia, quanto diutius considero," inquit, "tanto mihi res videtur obscurior." '

Tertullian, *ad Nat.* ii. 2 : 'Thales Milesius, Croeso sciscitanti, quid de deis arbitraretur, post aliquot deliberandi commeatus, nihil renuntiavit.'

Tert. *Apol.* xlvi. 8 : 'Quid enim Thales, ille princeps physicorum, sciscitanti Croeso de divinitate certum renuntiavit, commeatus deliberandi saepe frustratus ? '

Plainly in this account of the procrastinating reply of Simonides to Hiero on the nature of God there is such similarity in Minucius to Cicero that there can be no doubt of his dependence upon him, while it is equally obvious that Tertullian does not depend directly upon Cicero since he has chosen different names for the heroes of the story.

[1] On these and others, see Borleffs (*op. cit.*).

How can this divergence coupled with so much agreement be accounted for? Some would send us back to Varro, whose *de Rebus Divinis* Tertullian in the previous chapter of *ad Nat.* says he will use as his authority for heathen theology. But as we do not possess Varro's work we are unable to say whether the story occurred in him, or whether, if it did, the characters were Thales and Croesus. One fact, at all events, militates against what is merely a conjecture, that this instance is entirely wanting in the Greek apologists. Here, too, Heinze, the redoubtable champion of Tertullian, is totally at a loss, and weakly suggests that Tertullian drew from memory of some source he knows not what. Now let us note two significant facts. Tertullian agrees more with Minucius in the *ad Nat.* than in the *Apol.* in the nature of the question asked by the inquirer: Min., 'quid et quales arbitraretur deos'; *ad Nat.*, 'quid de deis arbitraretur'; *Apol.*, 'de divinitate.' The story is also summarised a shade more closely to Minucius in the *ad Nat.* than in the *Apol.* These things cannot be accidental. In the next place, when Tertullian was writing the *Apol.*, whence did he get the expression 'Thales, ille princeps physicorum'? He could have seen it in a later passage of Minucius (xix. 4), 'sit Thales Milesius omnium primus qui primus omnium de coelestibus disputavit.' What then must be concluded? The conjecture that Minucius corrected Tertullian by the aid of Cicero can have no probability, since Minucius takes Cicero for his inspiration and his model, not piecemeal as suggested by reminiscences in Tertullian. Neither is it necessary to agree with Ebert that Tertullian deliberately changed the names to conceal the theft. The following course of events seems probable. At this point, when writing the *ad Nat.*, Tertullian reproduced Minucius from memory, but while expressions came back to his mind the names of the characters did not, but instead Thales took their place. Quite unsuspicious of the error, Tertullian asked himself who was the king in question, and as Croesus was nearly contemporary, and had spoken of similar things to Solon and others, he set him down as the second personage. Next, when he was composing the *Apol.*, Tertullian did not

think of referring again to Minucius on this point, but simply followed the *ad Nat.*, altering it slightly and adding for greater preciseness a description of Thales from what he remembered in another passage of Minucius. We are prepared to believe that Tertullian could have been so careless because in *ad Nat.* ii. 2 he wrongly attributes the dictum of Socrates to Epicurus which is found rightly stated in Minucius (xiii. 1).

The second quadruple example concerns passages containing abusive references to the stories about the gods in Homer and the poets which Minucius calls 'figmenta et mendacia' and Tertullian 'ludibria.' In the opinion of Heinze, although he only had the *Oct.* and the *Apol.* in mind, this is the most instructive passage for the relationship of both to each other. 'No early or later independent apology stands so near as Minucius to Tertullian in the choice and wording of example' (p. 361). If he had compared the *ad Nat.* he would have found strong confirmation of this view. Those who, like Wilhelm, would resolve all these questions into imitation of a common source must here, as elsewhere also, admit that the two authors are related in the first degree. These are the passages to be compared. Min. xxiv. 3–5 (xxiii. 3–5) : 'Hic (Homerus) enim praecipuus bello Troico deos vestros, etsi ludos facit, tamen in hominum rebus et actibus miscuit, hic eorum paria composuit, sauciavit Venerem, Martem vinxit, vulneravit, fugavit. Iovem narrat Briareo liberatum, ne a diis ceteris ligaretur, et Sarpedonem filium, quoniam morti non poterat eripere, cruentis imbribus flere, et loro Veneris inlectum flagrantius, quam in adulteras soleat, cum Iunone uxore concumbere. Alibi Hercules stercora egerit et Apollo Admeto pecus pascit. Laomedonti vero muros Neptunus instituit, nec mercedem operis infelix structor accepit.'

Tertullian, *ad Nat.* i. 10 : 'Adhuc meminimus Homeri. Ille opinor est, qui divinam maiestatem humana condicione tractavit, casibus et passionibus humanis deos imbuens, qui de illis favore diversis gladiatoria quodammodo paria composuit, Venerem sauciat sagitta humana, Martem tredecim mensibus in vinculis detinet fortasse periturum,

eadem Iovem paene perpessum a coelitum plebe traducit aut lacrimas eius super Sarpedonem excutit, aut luxuriantem cum Iunone foedissime inducit, commendato libidinis desiderio per commemorationem amicarum. Exinde quis non poetarum ex auctoritate principis sui in deos insolens aut vera prodendo aut falsa fingendo ?'

Tert. *Apol.* xiv. 2–4 : 'Sed conversus ad litteras vestras, . . . , quantum invenio ludibria ! deos inter se propter Troianos et Achivos ut gladiatorum paria congressos depugnasse ; Venerem humana sagitta sauciatam, cum filium suum Aeneam ne interimeretur, rapere voluisset ; Martem tredecim mensibus in vinculis paene consumptum ; Iovem ne eandem vim a ceteris experiretur, opera cuiusdam monstri liberatum, et nunc flentem Sarpedonis casum, nunc foede subantem in sororem sub commemoratione non ita delectarum iam pridem amicarum. Exinde quis non poeta ex auctoritate principis sui dedecorator invenitur deorum ? Hic Apollinem Admeto pascendis pecoribus addicit ; ille Neptuni structorias operas Laomedonti locat.'

Cicero, *de Divin.* II. x. 25 : 'Si enim nihil fit extra fatum, nihil levari re divina potest. Hoc sentit Homerus, cum querentem Iovem inducit, quod Sarpedonem filium a morte contra fatum eripere non posset.'

The correspondence with Cicero is confined to Jupiter's grief for Sarpedon which Minucius relates in a form so close to Cicero that it can scarcely be doubted that the latter was his direct source. Confirmation of this impression is found in the very next words of Minucius on the forging of the thunderbolt of Jupiter, where he is closer to Cicero (*de Div.* II. xix. 43) than to Virgil (*Aen.* viii. 423). On Sarpedon, Tertullian is nearer to Minucius in the *Apol.* than in the *ad Nat.*, but he is too far from Cicero in either case to have had direct recourse to him. The rest of the resemblances lie between Minucius and Tertullian only. First the *Oct.* and the *ad Nat.* may be compared from the point of composition. Here the agreement is so much closer than with the *Apol.* that if Minucius imitated Tertullian he must also have consulted the *ad Nat.* In the *Oct.* and *ad Nat.* the subject of the whole sentence of examples which follow is Homer,

which is not so in the *Apol.* Minucius says that Homer ' mixed up the gods with the affairs and doings of men.' Tertullian has nothing of this in the *Apol.*, but he gives in the *ad Nat.* the equivalent, remarking that Homer ' has treated of the divine majesty after a human manner, sullying the gods with human accidents and passions.' In verbal expression the *Oct.* and *ad Nat.* approximate more than the *Oct.* and *Apol.*, *e.g.* Min. ' paria composuit,' *ad Nat.* ' gladiatoria . . . paria composuit,' *Apol.* ' ut gladiatorum paria congressos ' ; Min. ' Martem vinxit,' *ad Nat.* ' Martem . . . in vinculis detinet,' *Apol.* ' Martem . . . in vinculis paene consumptum ' ; Min. ' cum Iunone uxore concumbere,' *ad Nat.* ' luxuriantem cum Iunone,' *Apol.* ' subantem in sororem.' A further phenomenon appears in the rising degree of abusiveness against the gods in the *Oct.*, *ad Nat.*, and *Apol.*, which shows that either Minucius carefully mitigated the insults of Tertullian or Tertullian increased the scorn each time that he wrote. Minucius says that Venus was wounded. Tertullian reduces her majesty more and more. In the *ad Nat.* he tells us that it was a human arrow [1] that wounded her, and in the *Apol.* he adds that it was to save her own son from death. Minucius records that Mars was bound. Tertullian expatiates upon his sufferings. In the *ad Nat.* he remarks that Mars was kept in bonds for thirteen months and perhaps had been near to death, but in the *Apol.* he adds that he had very nearly wasted away altogether. Minucius relates that Jupiter was delivered by Briareus. Tertullian shows his contempt for the fable. Homer, he says, in the *ad Nat.*, traduces Jupiter on the subject of his extreme sufferings from the mob of heaven, but in the *Apol.* Tertullian sneers that Jupiter was liberated by some monster or other. Minucius, reporting Homer, says of Jupiter that he ' flagrantius cum Iunone uxore concumbere ' than with the adulteresses. Tertullian intensifies the salaciousness of the scandal. In the *ad Nat.* he says that Homer represents Jupiter as ' luxuriantem cum Iunone ' most disgracefully, exhibiting his ' libidinis desiderium ' by a list of his mistresses. When Tertullian comes to write

[1] Actually Venus was wounded by the spear of Diomedes.

the *Apol.* he finds in heathen literature Jupiter 'foede subantem in sororem,' with a list of his mistresses not now for a long time so dear as she. The same is found in two other instances common to the *Oct.* and *Apol.* but not in the *ad Nat.* Minucius recalls the stories of Apollo feeding flocks for Admetus, and of Neptune putting up walls for Laomedon, the unhappy builder ('structor') receiving no pay for the work. In Tertullian this becomes: 'One awards ('addicit') Apollo to Admetus for the purpose of feeding cattle; another hires out ('locat') the building services ('structorias operas') of Neptune to Laomedon,' thus implying that Apollo was a slave and Neptune a labourer. Let us now assume that Minucius borrowed from Tertullian. This, then, would be his process. From *Apol.* xiv. he took all the examples of gods behaving as human beings except that of Aesculapius. But for the construction of his sentence he turned to *ad Nat.* i. 10, transferred it along with certain expressions, using also the material obtained from the *Apol.* For an introduction about Homer he next turned to Cicero (*de Rep.* IV. v. 5; *Tusc. Disp.* ii. 27) for the way in which Plato treated that poet, disregarding the less direct passage in *ad Nat.* ii. 7. From Cicero directly again he took the particulars about Sarpedon. Finally he added from Cicero or from elsewhere four more examples which had not occurred to Tertullian: Hercules cleaning the Augean stables, the lightning of Jupiter made by the Cyclops (xxiv. 6), the adultery of Mars and Venus, and Jupiter's rape of Ganymede (xxiv. 7). What a prodigious labour of compilation for one short passage! There is improbability on the face of it. The solution must be otherwise, and the key to it lies in the intermediary position which is occupied by the *ad Nat.*, where Tertullian in construction, wording, and ridicule of the gods approaches Minucius so much more nearly than in the *Apol.*, and which we might expect if Minucius was prior, but not *vice versa*. Therefore we agree with Borleffs that the facts allow us to believe that Tertullian first used the *Oct.* for the *ad Nat.*, and afterwards consulted it again for the *Apol.*, when he altered the construction, increased the degree of opprobrium,

and added more examples to what he had first transcribed.

The sentiment of Lactantius that Tertullian was ' omni genere literarum peritus,' though doubtless well deserved, has led many to accept the *a priori* argument that Tertullian was too profound to have been a servile copyist. They point also to his original, pioneering, creative genius so remarkable as compared with other early ecclesiastical writers, having no need of material gathered here and there. But these impressions must stand the test of close investigation into matter, if they are to become more than a pious sentiment chiefly founded upon the recognition of a style in which a great display of erudition is combined with astonishing fertility of expression. It is said, then, with regard to matter, that Tertullian generally cites his sources. For example, in two passages common with Minucius the authority is given by Tertullian only. He says that it is Ctesias who reports ' Persas cum suis matribus misceri ' (*Apol.* ix. 7), while Minucius (xxxi. 3) only tells us that ' it is lawful.' Again, on the subject of the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis, Tertullian (xlviii.) quotes a jest as emanating from Laberius in one of his mimes, but Minucius (xxxiv. 7) only produces it as a comment of his own, with a mere general reference to some unnamed mime-writer who had made fun of the idea. Now, quite dispassionately, is there any importance in these citations of Ctesias and Laberius ? How many of Tertullian's readers would know anything about them ? Minucius has not thought it worth while to give their names, and Tertullian may have only desired to appear erudite in respect of little-known authors whom he cites while concealing his principal sources. However this may be, Minucius does cite where Tertullian, using the same ideas, does not, and where the importance of the reference warrants it, *e.g.* Fronto on the Agapai (ix. 6 ; xxxi. 2), Flavius Josephus and Antonius Julianus on the history of the Jews (xxxiii. 4), and Demosthenes on the favouritism of the Delphic oracle to Philip of Macedon (xxvi. 6). But there is no need to assume that Tertullian or Minucius or any other early Christian apologist was

guilty of conscious dishonesty. The first defenders of the faith were actuated by expedience rather than by punctiliousness in citation. As their readers were presumably to be the heathen they sometimes mentioned classical sources which appeared effective for their purpose, as Minucius cites Plato and others, but often they did not say where their material came from, even if it was a well-known heathen author, which is the case with Minucius and his great obligations to Cicero and Seneca. On the Christian side no recognised literature existed. The sporadic, occasional, and for the most part comparatively inconsiderable literary productions which had appeared, little known outside their own neighbourhood, had established no tradition which would oblige one author to cite another, and the heathen to be sure would not be at all interested in the matter. So far as the defence of Christianity was concerned the main thing before a writer was to adapt it to the present circumstances. Therefore we find the old material constantly worked up from all sides in more or less fresh forms, with only occasionally some originality here and there. The same process of working over the same ground was applied generally in early Christian literature. Great men like Irenaeus, Cyprian, and Lactantius did not scorn to make full use of their predecessors. In the case of the two latter they are both much indebted to Minucius and Tertullian, but Cyprian does not mention either, while Lactantius confines himself to one admission that Minucius was his authority for the argument that Saturn was called the son of Heaven and Earth because he appeared suddenly in Italy as if he had fallen from the sky (*Inst. Div.* I. xi. 55). There is, therefore, no antecedent improbability that Tertullian, who was not greater than Cyprian and Lactantius, on the score of his superiority to Minucius, should have pillaged that author without acknowledgment. Indeed, if he had had the *Octavius* in his hands it would have been a remarkable circumstance if he had not used it just as he chose, and without indicating his source. Positive proof that Tertullian so employed other works has been forthcoming and is universally allowed, although a complete

exploration of his sources has not yet been made, not even of the *Apologeticus*, despite Heinze's labours. A mass of evidence would be out of place here and a few indications must suffice. Scholars are agreed upon Tertullian's exploitation of Justin M., but the force of originality is always given to the imitation. To Justin is owed the earlier part of the *Apologeticus*,[1] and so much more that Harnack holds Justin to be Tertullian's chief master in apologetics. The same author also supplied Tertullian with a good part of his *adversus Iudaeos* and *adversus Marcionem*. Yet he does not acknowledge his obligations to Justin as an apologist and mentions him only once as an adversary of Gnosticism. For example, Justin had exposed the injustice of procedure against Christians on the score of an appellation only, forty years before Tertullian took it up again. Says Justin (1 *Apol.* iv.) : ' And you do not punish those among yourselves before they are convicted ; but in our case you receive the name as proof against us.' Tertullian (*Apol.* ii.) argues : ' attention is given only to that which is required by public hate, namely, a confession of the name, not an inquiry into the crime. But where you investigate the case of some criminal, you are not content to pronounce the verdict at once upon his confession of the mere name of murderer, or sacrilegious, or incestuous person. . . .' Justin (1 *Apol.* iii.) remarks : ' For we are accused of being " Christians," but to hate what is excellent (*chreston*) is unjust.' In Tert. (*Apol.* iii.) this becomes : ' But " Christian," so far as the meaning of the word is concerned, is derived from anointing. Yes, and even when it is wrongly pronounced by you " Chrestianus," for you do not even know accurately the name that you hate, it is derived from sweetness and benignity. You hate, therefore, in the guiltless even a guiltless name.' Again Justin (1 *Apol.* iv.) protests that the followers of the philosophers adopted their names without restraint, which is expanded by Tert. (*Apol.* iii. end), saying that the philosophers and others are called, without offence, by the names of the founders of their systems. Here Tertullian is caught ' in flagrante delicto ' of the tactics

[1] See Ebert, *op. cit.* pp. 379 f.

of the compiler. Like Irenaeus, Theodoret, and Augustine, Tertullian (*Apol.* xiii.) follows Justin (1 *Apol.* xxvi. lvi.) in his error of identifying a statue in Rome as being in honour of Simon Magus which was, in fact, erected to the Sabine deity Semo Sancus. Justin maintains (1 *Apol.* lv.) that the Roman standards were symbols of the Cross, which Tert. (*Apol.* xvi.) reproduces.

With Tatian, Justin's pupil, Tertullian had much sympathy in temperament, and he has been held to have been partly indebted to him for his Logos theory. From Tatian's *Address to the Greeks* he is also thought to have drawn some material in various works, *e.g.* from c. iii., on Heraclitus (*ad Mart.* iv. ; *de An.* ii.), from cc. ix. xi. on Fate and Free-will (*de An.* xxi. ; *adv. Marc.* ii. 5–7), from c. xxi. on the priority of Moses to the Greek poets (*Apol.* xxii.). The basic ideas of Tertullian's *de Praescriptione Haeret.* are founded on the third book of Irenaeus, *adv. Haereses.* In his *de Carne Christi,* Tertullian follows Irenaeus. Once only does he acknowledge Irenaeus, and for the purpose of disclaiming originality, in his *adv. Valentin.*, which is practically a translation of Iren. i. 1–12. Tertullian has clearly pillaged this author. The relation between the *Apol.* and the *Embassy* of Athenagoras is also very close, *e.g.* the refutation of the charge of atheism (*Apol.* xxiv. ; *Emb.* iv.). Tertullian, moreover, seems to have had access to some forged Christian sources not used by Minucius. For example, the spurious letter of M. Aurelius on 'the thundering legion' [1] appended to Justin's works was thought by Tertullian to have been taken from the official archives (*Apol.* v.), and he refers (*Apol.* xxi.) to the same documentary source for a record of the darkness which fell on the world at the Crucifixion (cf. Justin, 1 *Apol.* xxxv.). After a study of the literary relationship between Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho,* Tertullian's *adv. Marcionem,* and the two anti-Jewish Greek dialogues, *Athanasius and Zacchaeus* and *Timothy and Aquila,* F. C. Conybeare (in *Anecdota Oxoniensia,* 1898, p. lv) says that he does not think it disputable that the document underlying these two dialogues was in the hands of Tertullian, colouring

[1] See Euseb. *H.E.* v. 5.

his works against Praxeas and against the Jews, and his third book against Marcion. Finally, Harnack thinks that Tertullian in *Apol.* xiv. has imitated sections 19, 38, 41 of the *Acta* of Apollonius.

Enough, perhaps, has been here produced to show in what direction a thorough and searching investigation of Tertullian's Greek sources would tend, but it is not necessary to go to all this trouble to prove that he was a zealous compiler, since he has confessed it himself. In the opening of his apologetic work *de Testimonio Animae* Tertullian admits the existence of 'opuscula penes nos,' in which Christian writers have sought to produce out of heathen philosophy and poetry sentiments favourable to Christianity, showing that therein is nothing new or monstrous, *e.g.* in the dogma of the Unity of God. But as the heathen regarded this method as mere *ex parte* tactics, Tertullian rejects it in favour of an argument which must be universally acknowledged, a 'novum testimonium' in fact, that of the 'anima.' Clearly these 'opuscula' which Tertullian possessed and was quite familiar with were the Greek apologists, such as Justin, Tatian, and Athenagoras. If he had Minucius in mind his 'anima' proof was not a 'novum testimonium' at all, but certainly Tertullian gave it new force. There would be no need to charge him with barefaced robbery and falsehood. Minucius had certainly produced this argument, but in the main he had tried like the others to get a hearing from the heathen out of studies in their own literature. What stands, however, is that Tertullian had plenty of apologetic material to hand of which he had effected a close examination. That he had also made shrewd use of these books the next quotation, which is a literary confession, will show. Tertullian, *adversus Valentinianos*, v., defends himself from the possible charge by the Valentinians that he has evolved his arguments out of his own head. He claims that his materials both as to the opinions and refutation 'have already been produced in carefully written volumes by so many eminently holy and excellent men, for instance, Justin philosopher and martyr, Miltiades the sophist of the churches, Irenaeus that very

exact inquirer into all doctrines, our own Proculus the model of chaste old age and Christian eloquence. . . . It is not likely that a writer should have so much leisure time as to get out matter for himself which is already available (nemo tam otiosus fertur, stilo ut materias habens fingat).' The literary process of Tertullian is here described 'ex ore suo.' From it emerge three facts. (1) He cites only when it is to his immediate advantage. Although in this very work he proceeds to make lengthy extracts from Irenaeus he does not indicate their origin as such. (2) He possesses a collection of Christian books, some of them belonging to the previous generation and others contemporary. (3) All these Tertullian draws upon at will. So far is he from ignoring the labours of others that he will not take the time and trouble of research if it can be avoided. He even excuses himself for his lack of originality. Therefore the avowal of the compiler is complete.[1] If he has treated the illustrious Justin and Irenaeus after this sort, how might he be expected to deal with the comparatively obscure Minucius?

Tertullian was certainly not everywhere creative and a pioneer. Most of his arguments have been taken from the Greek apologists of the second century and from other Greek sources. But he was an adept in taking up material and moulding it to his own purposes, and this combined with the individuality of his temper, the forcefulness of his style, and the circumstantial motive of all his compositions, is sufficient to give an appearance of originality to all that he says. What does belong to him and what entitles him to the greatest praise is the excellent form which Tertullian gives to the older, somewhat prosy, and not always attractive argumentation, producing it with a new liveliness, greater cogency and appositeness, with the modernity of a quickened age.

To conclude, we believe that Tertullian would not have

[1] We might go further with the evidence and show that Tertullian was an incorrigible compiler from his own works! For example he was constantly going back to his own *adv. Marcionem*, the third book of which, *e.g.*, is almost identically reproduced in the second half of the *adversus Iudaeos*.

hesitated to expand, contract, or literally transcribe anything in Minucius that attracted him, but we cannot agree with Provost Salmon (art. ' Min. Fel.' *D.C.B.*) that ' Tertullian's changes can hardly have any other object than to disguise his obligation,' were this view to be adopted. He simply found Minucius useful for his purpose, and without any other motive than that of expediency, or any consciousness as to the question of literary honesty, exploited him unacknowledged to the full.

CHAPTER VIII

The Common Source Theory

So far we have assumed that for the great intimacy of relationship between the *Oct.* and the *Apol.* the only explanation can be direct imitation, and upon this the conclusions of the previous chapter have been based. It has, however, been asserted that neither Minucius nor Tertullian copied the other but instead both used the work now lost of some Latin apologist. The suggestion was first made by W. von Hartel,[1] who left it to be worked out by F. Wilhelm.[2] Obviously, so far as the question of priority is concerned with comparisons the common source hypothesis cannot yield any positive result, but it is in itself of the greatest interest and is far from being destitute of some underlying truth.

Wilhelm begins by instituting Latin classical comparisons. He finds that Minucius has a large number of parallel passages with Cicero's books *de Nat. Deor.* and *de Div.* which he tabulates at length, and that there is no doubt that Minucius has followed Cicero directly in most of them, so that even the gap in the text of the *de Nat. Deor.* after III. xxv. 65 can be filled by means of Min. v. 7–10. But Tertullian has certainly not consulted the books of Cicero for the *Apol.* Where he shows a likeness to Cicero and to Minucius at the same time, however, he has not used the medium of Minucius. In such passages both Minucius and Tertullian are indebted to a common source which has drawn from Cicero. Passing to Seneca, Wilhelm sees a mutual agreement between Tertullian and Minucius with

[1] In *Zeitschr. f. österr. Gymn.* 20, 1869, p. 367.

[2] 'De Min. Fel. Oct. et Tert. Apol.' in *Breslauer philol. Abhandl.* 2, 1887.

the *de Providentia* at one time, but single, especially in the case of Tertullian, at another. Hence he infers that both authors followed the same Christian writer who had gone to Seneca. From Minucius it appears that the common author had also made use of Varro. Although Tertullian could have obtained his Varronian material directly, the probability is, therefore, that it comes from the same source as that of Minucius. To sum up, (1) Minucius and Tertullian compiled from the same author, who (2) had himself drawn from Cicero, Seneca, and Varro, and who (3) must have been a Latin ecclesiastical writer, because of the literal nature of the resemblances between Minucius and Tertullian, and since, besides, the Greeks did not copy Latin authors.

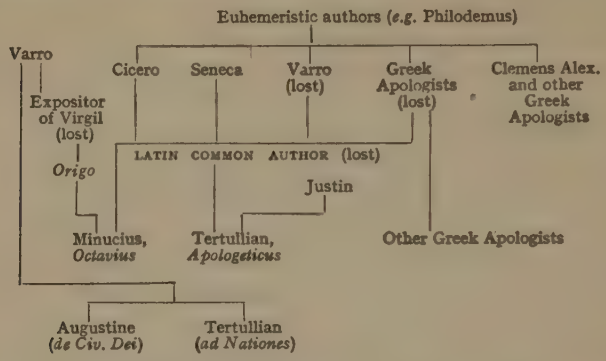
Wilhelm next makes comparisons between Minucius, Tertullian, and the Greek authors, and believes himself to have proved that Minucius and Tertullian owe their resemblances to the Greeks from both having used a Latin author who either followed in the steps of Justin, Tatian and Theophilus, or of Greek writers used by them. He rejects Celsus as the source of the charges against the Christians in Minucius. Regarding the date of the *Octavius* it must have been nearly contemporary with the *Apologeticus*, as neither Minucius nor Tertullian knew the other.

Wilhelm's final opinions (pp. 84–86) are as follows. He has shown that Minucius and Tertullian have made use of the lost apology of the same Latin ecclesiastical writer. As regards the *Apol.* of Tertullian, its greater part in which he deals with Divine literature, the Person of Christ, the charges against the Christians of being enemies of the Empire and the causes of public calamities (cc. iii.–vi. xi. xviii.–xxi. xxviii.–xlvii.) is not original, as is seen from the similarity between it and the Greek apologists, Justin, Tatian, and Theophilus. And yet, with the exception of Justin, Tertullian has not directly borrowed from the Greek apologists, nor can it be proved that he had access to lost Greek apologies, *e.g.* that of Apollinaris of Hierapolis, or of Melito.

Neither could these things have been borrowed from Minucius since they are not in the *Octavius*. The great part, therefore, of the *Apol.* must be derived from the common author. For the lesser part, does it not seem more probable that Tertullian has obtained it, not from Minucius, but from the source of the greater? The same Roman stamp, indeed, marks the whole. What did this lost Latin apology contain? Wilhelm says that he readily agrees with Hartel (*op. cit.* p. 348), that the contents may perhaps be negatively and positively stated in the title written at the beginning of Cyprian's *Quod idola*: (1) 'quod idola dii non sint; (2) et quod Deus Unus sit; (3) et quod per Christum salus credentibus data sit.' The old Latin apologist had access to Varro's *Rerum Divinarum Libri*, Seneca's tracts *de Providentia* and *de Superstitione*, and also to the works of some Greek apologists. On his name, after the custom of ecclesiastical writers, Minucius and Tertullian remain silent. Perhaps Tertullian was thinking of this author when he admits at the beginning of his *de Test. Animae* that certain Christian writers had used heathen literature, and had advocated the works of the poets and the philosophers for the purpose of defending Christian doctrine. However, in *adv. Valentin.* v. Tertullian names, amongst those whom he had followed in his book against the Valentinians, Justin, Miltiades, and Irenaeus, and in addition one Proculus,[1] 'virginis senectae et Christianae eloquentiae dignitatem.' Although we do not know that Proculus wrote a defence of Christianity, yet it is not unlikely that he observed the solemn custom by which the more learned of the Christians composed an apology and gave a specimen of the faith. 'And if this Proculus used the Latin tongue,' concludes Wilhelm, 'I could believe him to have been that author common to Tertullian and Minucius, whose memory I have restored.'

[1] Presumably the 'leader of the Phrygian sect' in Rome mentioned by Eusebius, *H.E.* ii. 25. Compare also Pseudo-Tert. *adv. Omn. Haer.* vii. Caius the presbyter wrote a dialogue against the Montanist Proculus in the episcopate of Zephyrinus of Rome (199–217).

Wilhelm's hypothesis may be conveniently represented graphically by means of the stemma below.



The thesis of Wilhelm shows weakness in three respects. (1) His primary argument is that since Minucius and Tertullian have almost a verbal agreement in most important passages, yet as in certain particulars they often differ much in one or the other producing more arguments or examples, they must depend upon a common author. Against this there is need of the counsel of caution. The example of Cyprian's *Quod idola* is brought forward by Norden (*op. cit.* p. 4) as being admittedly a copy of the *Octavius*. Three instances will suffice. Speaking of Saturn, Minucius (xxi. 5) says that he taught the country people many things, and how to make implements. In the *Quod idola* (i.) Cyprian adds that as a rustic Saturn is depicted carrying a sickle. Minucius (xxi. 6) records that Janus gave his name to the Janiculum. *Quod idola* (ii.) adds that Janus has given his name to the month January, and so he is represented with two faces to show the beginning and ending of the year. On the foreign gods adopted by the Romans and who had not been able to save their own native worshippers, the very words of Minucius (xxv. 9) are repeated in *Quod idola* (ii.), with the addition of the Penates of Aeneas and Venus Calva. Although the same thing often occurs, no one has yet contended that Minucius and Cyprian are indebted to a common author. This, thinks Norden, shows the foolishness of Wilhelm's primary argument. (2) The 'common author'

who is supposed to play so important a part cannot be produced. (3) On the mere strength alone of Tertullian having included a Montanist writer whom he admired among the authorities followed by him for his tract on the Valentinian heresy, Wilhelm suggests Proculus as having perhaps been the ' common author ' sought for. He admits that we do not know enough about him to say whether he wrote an apology or even used Latin. It is, indeed, a despairing effort to visualise the unknown, and had been, for the credit of the work, far better left unmade. Nevertheless Wilhelm deserves the praise due to a painstaking pioneer. Naturally those upon whom he had made a favourable impression were anxious to offer a happier conjecture concerning the identity of the common author than he had done, and soon two suggestions were forthcoming. According to K. Sittl [1] he was the Roman Apollonius martyred *c.* 185 in the reign of Commodus. The grounds are taken from the biographical notice supplied by Jerome who (*de Viris Illustr.* xlii.) says that Apollonius, a Senator of the city of Rome, having been betrayed as a Christian by his servant, composed an ' insigne volumen ' displaying the system of the faith which he read in the Senate, and by which (*ibid.* liii.) he had, together with Pope Victor, inaugurated Latin Christian literature. It is deduced, therefore, that this ' remarkable book ' about the Christian religion was an apology, and the first Latin apology. Jerome's account depends rather loosely upon that of Eusebius (*H.E.* v. 21), who testifies that Apollonius was renowned for learning and wisdom (philosophy), and that he delivered a most eloquent defence of the faith before the Senate, which was included in the collection (lost) of the narratives of the old martyrs made by Eusebius. Probably Jerome is wrong in hastily concluding that Apollonius was a Senator and read a Christian apology in the Senate, but he may have seen the *Acta* of the martyr in the lost collection of Eusebius, and this may be the document described by him as an ' insigne volumen.' The *Acta S. Apollonii* were originally written in Latin and are extant only in two

[1] In *Burs. Jahresb.* 59, 1889, p. 20.

versions which agree and disagree, the one in Armenian,[1] anciently translated from Greek, and the other in Greek.[2] In these *Acta* there is nothing to show that the Senate took any active part in the proceedings, although some Senators, perhaps merely curious, were present at the second interrogation. Neither can any reference be found indicating that Apollonius had composed a real apology such as Jerome appears to suggest by 'insigne volumen.' The whole defence of the martyr is obviously spoken, not written. Often the replies are unusually long, but the *Acta* are, like others, simply an official report of the trial. Although in the answers of Apollonius there are the elements of an apology these cannot constitute him the first Latin apologist. Perhaps Jerome was misled in reading the report of the legal proceedings by Apollonius calling his defence an 'apologia' several times in the usual legal sense of the word. If, then, Apollonius had any influence upon Minucius and Tertullian it must have been confined to the *Acta* which Minucius, if he could be so late, and Tertullian may have read in the original Latin. Monceaux (*op. cit.*) dismisses the notion for very good reasons. There are no decisive analogies between the *Acta* and Minucius and Tertullian. Not a reminiscence of Apollonius in detail or expression can be found in either of them. Any resemblances that may exist are reduced to commonplaces which have been repeated to satiety by all the apologists of the second and third centuries. There was nothing useful in the *Acta* for Minucius and Tertullian to take. No prototype exists in Apollonius of any of the great parallel developments of Minucius and Tertullian, so that even if details of resemblances could be shown this would not explain the relation between Minucius and Tertullian.

The following resemblances may be compared, though not with any positive result. The Armenian version of the *Acta*: section 1, on the oath by the Fortune of Caesar;

[1] Published by the Mekhitarist Fathers in their lives of the Saints, vol. i. Venice, 1874, and translated into English by F. C. Conybeare in *Monuments of Early Christianity*, 1894.

[2] Published in *Analecta Bollandiana*, vol. 14, 1895.

Min. xxix., Tert. *Apol.* xxviii. Section 8, on the bloodless sacrifice offered by Christians; Min. xxxii. Section 18, on the heathen worship of heads of oxen; Min. xxviii. 7–9. Section 21, on an Egyptian god made out of a common vessel; Min. xxiii. Section 26, on the lofty moral purity of Christians; Min. xxx. Section 38, on philosophers and just men slain; Tert. *Apol.* xiv. The Greek version: sections 8 and 44, containing reflections on the worship of the Christians; Min. xxxii. Sections 18 and 21, containing railleries on idols; Min. xxviii. Sections 19 and 41, containing anecdotes relative to Socrates; Tert. *Apol.* xiv., in which Harnack thinks Tertullian has imitated Apollonius. Section 26, on the courage of the Christians; Min. xxxvii.

The second identification of the common author is with Victor I, Bishop of Rome 189–198 or 199. Jerome reports that he wrote some 'mediocria de religione volumina,' and on the strength of these reckons Victor as the first of Latin ecclesiastical writers (*de Vir. Illustr.* liii., cf. xxxiv.; Chron. ad a. Abr. 2209). We know that Victor wrote several encyclical letters and that he, like Minucius and Tertullian, was a North African. P. de Lagarde [1] attempted to prove that he composed an apology, a fragment of which remains in the Codex Fuldensis of the *Apologeticus* of Tertullian, and that this apology was the common source of Minucius and Tertullian. But one obstinate fact is insuperable. Jerome is completely ignorant of the attribution of an apology to Victor. It must remain that in the absence of positive evidence we cannot admit that Victor wrote a work of this kind.

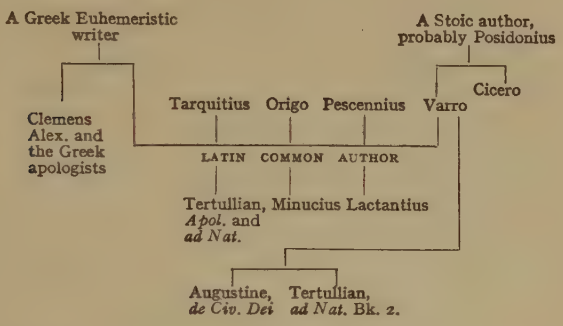
The most important contribution on the common source theory has been made in course of an attempt to recover as many fragments as possible surviving in Christian literature of the lost *Books of Divine Antiquities* of Varro, but owing to its inclusion in the larger subject without mention in the title the work has escaped the notice of some of the foremost scholars who have dealt with the controversy. In his

[1] In 'Septuaginta Studien,' in *Abhandl. der Götting. Ges. der Wiss.* xlvii. (1891), pp. 75–85.

'T. Varronis "Antiquitatum Rerum Divinarum Libri"' I, 14, 15, 16; praemissae sunt quaestiones Varronianae,'[1] the main object of R. Agahd is to put together what remains of Varro in various authors, including Minucius, Tertullian, Lactantius, and Augustine. On the very threshold, however, appears the problem of the common material in Minucius, Tertullian, and Lactantius. How much of it belongs to Varro through a common author who drew on Varro? Therefore (pp. 40–71) Agahd conducts an investigation into 'what remains of Varro's "Books on Divine matters" in Tertullian, *ad Nat.* and *Apol.*, in the *Oct.* of Minucius, and Book I. of the *Divine Institutes* of Lactantius, through the medium of some Christian author.' Agahd agrees with Wilhelm that Tertullian and Minucius drew from a common author, and adds that Lactantius derived his corresponding matter from the same source. This source, as Wilhelm says, was not Varro, but a writer who used Varro. But here Agahd reaches his point of departure from Wilhelm, on the extent to which the latter ascribes Varronian material to the common author. He denies that all which Wilhelm alleges to have been derived from Varro through the common author was in fact obtained from Varro, and maintains that in many places it is doubtful. The sources of the common author were (1) principally, some Greek philosophic writer of Euhemeristic views, the same who was used by Clement of Alexandria and the Greek apologists, and (2) Latin writers such as Tarquitius the historian, Pescennius Festus the African, and the author of the *Origo Gentis Romanae* or the Virgilian expositor on whom he depended, in addition to (3) Varro. The common author also supplied material of his own. Varro himself and Cicero have followed some Stoic author, probably Posidonius. After most minute comparisons and discussions Agahd succeeds in disentangling from Minucius, Tertullian, Lactantius, and others what he feels is certainly Varronian, and brings his work to a close by giving the fragments in order.

[1] In *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*, 24, Leipzig, 1898, pp. 1–220; Indices, pp. 367–381.

The stemma below will represent Agahd's views on the common author.



The title of Cyprian's *Quod idola* was thought to furnish a clue, according to Hartel and Wilhelm, to the contents of the common author. Following this supposition, the lost apology would have been destructive of the heathen religions in the first, and constructive on the Unity of God and salvation through Christ in the second and third of its parts. Agahd confidently supplies a summary of the anti-heathen polemic which he believes the common author to have contained, which may be reduced to seven heads. (1) An abusive collection of fables about the gods in heathen mythology culled chiefly from a Greek Euhemeristic source, with the addition of some particulars from Latin writers like Tarquitius. (2) A rationalistic explanation of the origin of the heathen gods from the same Greek Euhemeristic philosopher as the collection of fables was mostly taken from. (3) The history of Saturn drawn from the *Origo Gentis Romanae*, or from the expositor of Virgil used by the author of that work. It is doubtful if Varro was used on the subject. (4) A collection of anecdotes about the philosophers, some of which illustrated their vices, certainly derived from Greek sources. Perhaps Varro's *Saturae Menippeae* were also slightly used, but not his *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum*. (5) A collection of the sacred rites and mysteries of the Romans, Greeks, and Barbarians drawn from Varro, Greek sources, Pescennius Festus, and the common author's own

contemporary knowledge. (6) An account of the Roman gods, at what times and with what laws they were consecrated, in which Varro particularly was followed. (7) The treatment of Homer and the poets in Plato's *Republic*.

It remains to furnish examples in illustration of the method of Wilhelm and Agahd of proving the existence and use of a common source. A selection is therefore given, following the order of the text of Minucius.

On the Pagan miracles the passages are: Min. vii. 3, 4: 'The Idaean Mother (Cybele) is witness (of the value of Roman piety), who, on her arrival (in Italy), proved the chastity of a matron, and delivered the city from fear of the enemy. Witnesses, too, are the consecrated statues of the Equestrian Brothers (Castor and Pollux) by the Lake (Juturna), just as they appeared, panting on their foaming and reeking steeds, to announce the victory over Perseus, on the very same day they had gained it. Witness, again, is the renewal of the games in honour of offended Jupiter in consequence of a plebeian's dream. The proved efficacy of the self-sacrifice of the Decii is witness. Curtius is witness as well, who with the bulk of his horse or by (the gifts thrown in to his) honour, filled up the deep and yawning chasm.' Then Caecilius goes on to mention (vii. 4) the disasters associated with the names of the Allia, of Claudius, Junius, and of Flaminius at Trasimenus, owing to neglect of the auspices. The reply of Octavius is given in Min. xxvii. 4: 'From them (the demons) originate such stories as those which you have just told, that Jupiter demanded in a dream the renewal of his games, that there was an apparition of the Castors on horseback, that a boat followed a matron's girdle.' [1]

Tertullian, *Apol.* xxii. 12, says: 'But why should I expatiate on their (the demons') other clever devices, or even on their powers of spiritual deception? for example, the phantoms of the Castors, the water carried in a sieve, the ship drawn forward with a girdle, the beard reddened at a touch, with the object that stones might be reckoned to

[1] Alluding to the well-known story that a vessel containing a statue of Cybele was miraculously drawn up the Tiber by a woman.

be divinities, and that the True God should not be sought after.'

Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* II. ii. 6. Balbus the Stoic, endeavouring to prove the existence of the gods from their apparitions, proceeds: 'When (in the Latin war) A. Postumius, the dictator, contended in battle with Octavius Mamilius, the Tusculan, at Regillus, Castor and Pollux were seen fighting in our ranks on horseback; and more recently than that, the Tyndaridae announced the victory over Perseus; for as P. Vatinius, the grandfather of the youth of this name, was returning to Rome one night from his praefectorate at Reate, two young men on white horses told him that King Perseus had that day been captured, and he reported it to the Senate.' In II. iii. 7 Balbus goes on to show the evil consequences of the neglect of the auspices by Claudius, Junius, and by Flaminius at Trasimenus. Compare also *de Div.* I. xxiv. 51; II. iii. 10.

Wilhelm handles these passages in the following way. First he puts together the particulars found in Minucius. Caecilius (vii. 3) gives instances of Pagan miracles, of the Idaean Mother who, on her arrival in Rome (that is on the arrival of her image in a ship), vindicated the chastity of a matron, whose girdle (adds Octavius) was followed by the boat, and who delivered Rome from fear of the enemy; of the appearance of Castor and Pollux on horseback (in Rome) to announce the Roman victory over Perseus on the very day they had gained it (at Pydna) and whose consecrated statues were by the Lake (that is, the fountain of Juturna in the Forum); of the dream of a 'plebeius homo' in consequence of which the games of offended Jupiter were renewed, for (as Octavius adds, xxvii. 4) in the dream Jupiter had demanded this renewal; of the proved efficacy of the self-sacrifice of the Decii; of the filling up of the yawning chasm by Curtius with the bulk of his horse. Caecilius continues (vii. 4) that owing to the neglect of the auspices the disasters occurred which are associated with the names of the Allia, Claudius, Junius, and of Flaminius at Trasimenus. Octavius says (xxvii. 4) that the stories of Jupiter's demand in a dream, of the apparition of the Castors, of the

boat following a matron's girdle originate from the demons. Where does Minucius get this material? Did it come from Cicero? Certainly the instance of the Idaean Mother did not, for it is not in Cicero. Ebert says (p. 272) that Minucius has borrowed the example of Castor and Pollux directly from Cicero, but Wilhelm denies that it is due to him, since nothing is said in Minucius about the battle at Lake Regillus or P. Vatinius, nor does the speaker in Cicero say that the statues of the Equestrian Brothers were consecrated near the Lake, nor that they fought at Pydna, which the speaker in Minucius distinctly asserts. Again, the passage in Cicero's *de Nat. Deor.* which contains the story of the appearance of Castor and Pollux is wanting in respect of the dream in which Jupiter demanded the renewal of his games. It is hardly credible that Minucius took the latter from Cicero's *de Div.* I. xxvi. 55, for there Jupiter is not mentioned in connexion with the games that were renewed, and the dream was not that of a 'plebeius homo,' but that of a 'quidam rusticus Romanus.' The story is in Livy, II. xxxvi. 2, where Jupiter is mentioned, but it often occurs in Latin literature. Nor could the example of the Decii come from *de Div.* I. xxiv. 51. Perhaps both the Decii and Curtius were, however, suggested to the mind of Minucius by *de Nat. Deor.* II. iii. 10. Ebert, continues Wilhelm, says that the instances of the neglect of the auspices by Claudius, Junius, and Flaminius come directly from *de Nat. Deor.* II. iii. 7. But, on the other hand, the mention of the Allia will be sought in vain in the *de Nat. Deor.* and *de Div.* Turning to Florus, Wilhelm admits the nearness, including some verbal correspondences, of the account by Minucius of the appearance of Castor and Pollux to that which is found in that writer (*Epitome of Roman History*, I. 28, p. 48, 5, ed. O. Jahn), but doubts whether Minucius used this passage of Florus, since the latter does not mention the statues, nor are there any other passages in the *Octavius* which show that Minucius was acquainted with the works of Florus. Finally, Wilhelm questions whether Minucius owes anything to Livy. Florus used Livy as his authority, and the account may have been in the missing pages of Livy at this place. Yet although

Minucius sometimes agrees with Livy he does not apparently owe anything to him. The account of the miraculous appearance of Castor and Pollux is common in Latin literature. In the next place Wilhelm turns to Tertullian. His examples of Pagan miracles, which he attributes, as Minucius does (xxvii. 4), to the demons, comprise the phantoms of the Castors, the water carried in a sieve, the ship drawn forward with a girdle, and the beard reddened at a touch. Ebert contended that in the common passages, the imitations from Cicero in Tertullian bear the mark of Minucius, and that here Tertullian is clearly caught in a trap. One of his four examples is the reference to the apparition of Castor and Pollux. Wilhelm has already denied that Minucius borrowed this from Cicero, and therefore considers that Ebert's contention falls that Tertullian obtained it from Cicero through the medium of Minucius. But has Tertullian taken his examples of Castor and Pollux and the episode of the Idaean Mother directly from Minucius? For answer, the other two examples, the miracles of water carried in a sieve and of the beard reddened at a touch, mentioned by Tertullian, are missing in Minucius. Why then should not Tertullian have drawn the first pair of examples from the same source as the second pair, without having any need to go to Minucius for them? Hartel has clearly shown that Tertullian's account of the demons is not necessarily due to Minucius. Ecclesiastical writers on the subject often call attention to miracles like those in question, as, *e.g.*, Lact. *Inst. Div.* II. xvi. 11; Aug. *de Civ. Dei*, X. xvi. 4; and also a Pagan writer, Apuleius, *de Deo Socratis*, vii. In the next place Wilhelm inquires if Tertullian has drawn from Varro. On the authority of Varro, *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum*, the story of the sieve is told by Augustine, *de C.D.* xxii. 11, and in x. 16 Augustine repeats it almost in the same words, while in the context are other examples, including that of the Idaean Mother, which examples, therefore, also probably came from Varro. Although Augustine here omits Castor and Pollux, doubtless Varro quoted it, because other writers besides Minucius and Tertullian used it, as is clear, *e.g.*, from Lact. *I.D.*, II. vii. 9, who is not here following either

of them. What Augustine did was to choose from Varro some instances of miracles, passing over the others. Wilhelm admits that Tertullian had read Varro, and that what he says about the ' moving of the ship ' by means of the matron's girdle is very like Varro (in Aug. x. 16), but he denies that he borrowed the examples in question from Varro himself. Wilhelm has now reached the point where he brings forward the ' common source.' Varro is not Tertullian's authority, for from the beginning of c. xxii. Tertullian discusses the demons in the same way as the apologists do, so that there can be no doubt that he has converted to his own use the words of some old ecclesiastical writer. Further, it does not seem out of the way to assume that the apologist whom Tertullian followed in discussing the demons also furnished the examples which he, the old apologist, had borrowed from Varro. Returning now to Minucius, Wilhelm says that although he introduces in his examples some that are the same as those in Cicero, of the Decii, Curtius, Claudius, Junius, Flaminius, there are some that he did not get from him, as we have seen, the miracles of the Idaean Mother, of Castor and Pollux, and the dream of the ' plebeius homo.' Where did he obtain these ? Not from Varro directly, since there are no indications that he had seen his works ; not from Tertullian, for the latter does not mention the miraculous dream. Accordingly, it is probable that Minucius, in that part of c. vii. which contains these three examples, and in those chapters where, discussing the demons, he agrees with Tertullian, had before him the same authority as Tertullian, some old ecclesiastical writer.

Agahd (p. 54 f.) compares passages on the philosophers : Min. xiii. 1–4 ; xxxviii. 5 ; xxvi. 9, 12 ; Tert. *Apol.* xlvi. xxii. xiv. ; *ad Nat.* II. ii. ; I. x. ; Lact. *Inst. Div.* III. xx. 10, 15, 16. He refers the whole body of anecdotes to a common author who treated the subject after a Christian manner, just as he managed the dispute about the demons (cf. Min. xxvi. 9, Tert. *Apol.* xxii., on the demon of Socrates). The philosophers were vicious and the demons are false. With regard to the sources of the common author on the philosophers we are led to Greek with most certain indica-

tions. This is seen from Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos*, 2, p. 2, 19, where the same things are said in the same words about Aristotle, Plato, and Aristippus as in Tert. *Apol.* xlvi. It is possible that Varro was also used, as may be deduced from what Tertullian (*Apol.* xiv., cf. *ad Nat.* I. x.) says: 'Varro, the Roman Cynic, introduces three hundred headless Joves, or, as should be said, Jupiters.' This could not be from Varro's *Rerum Divinarum*, but must have been in his *Saturae Menippeae*.[1] Agahd is led to trace the material on the philosophers back to the common source by such passages as on the teaching of Plato. These are: Min. xix. 14; xxvi. 12; Tert. *Apol.* xlvi.; Cicero, *Tim.* ii. 6, cf. *de N.D.* I. xii. 20; Plato, *Tim.* v. p. 28 C. Here, says Agahd, Tertullian did not use Minucius, nor did Minucius plunder Tertullian and Cicero. Minucius remarks that Plato believed it to be a 'negotium' to find God (xxvi. 12), thus translating the word 'ergon' used by Plato (*Tim.* 28 C), while Tertullian (*Apol.* xlvi.) does not give the word 'negotium,' nor is he near Cicero, who (*de N.D.* I. xii. 30) speaks differently in connexion with the same place of Plato. Agahd does not believe that Minucius went either to Cicero or to Plato directly, but that both he and Tertullian availed themselves of the same third source. If Agahd is right, the common author must have particularly followed Plato in reporting his dictum that it was an 'ergon' to find God, translating the expression by 'negotium,' and Minucius, although most of his words are found in Cicero, must have used the common author exactly in this respect. Otherwise it would be necessary to believe that Minucius went to Plato directly, which Waltzing (*Musée Belge*, 1904) thinks he did.

Now comes an important set of comparisons, fully discussed by Agahd, dealing with the Euhemeristic conception of the origin of the heathen pantheon adopted by early Christian writers. It is worth while to give the passages in full or in substance.

Min. xx. 5 to xxi. 2: 'Our ancestors were ignorant in

[1] Satires in imitation of the Cynic philosopher Menippus, of which considerable fragments remain.

their beliefs.' 'Sacra facta sunt' of things which were only meant for consolation, such as worshipping 'reges defunctos,' whose 'memorias' they kept in 'statuis.' Before commerce threw the world open, and religions became fused, each nation venerated its own founder, some brilliant leader, or a 'reginam' of extraordinary chastity, or 'alicuius muneris vel artis repertorem' as a 'civem bonae memoriae.' In this way regard was given to the dead and their example preserved for posterity. Read the 'historicorum scripta,' or those of the philosophers. Euhemerus asserts that men 'ob merita virtutis aut muneris deos habitos,' and he denominates 'eorum natales, patrias, sepulchra,' locating them 'per provincias,' Jupiter in Dicte, Apollo in Delphi, Isis in Pharos, Ceres in Eleusis. Prodicus speaks of the apotheosis of men who, as a result of their travels, 'inventis novis frugibus utilitati hominum profuerunt.' Persaeus philosophises to the same effect, comprising under identical names the fruits discovered and 'frugum ipsarum repertores,' which reminds one of the quip, 'Venus is frigid without Liber and Ceres.'

Tertullian, *Apol.* x., says that there is no doubt that the gods were men. He appeals to the pagan conscience which shall be convicted 'de suis antiquitatum instrumentis,' testifying about the gods to this day 'et civitatibus, in quibus nati sunt, et regionibus, in quibus aliquid operati vestigia reliquerunt, in quibus etiam sepulti demonstrantur.' In c. xi. he argues that God made the world complete from the beginning. Saturn and Jupiter could contribute nothing. Every kind of fruit was in abundance before Liber, Ceres, and Minerva. Liber is reckoned a god because he first taught the use of the vine. Therefore it is unjust that Lucullus, who first introduced the cherry into Italy, has not been consecrated 'ut novae frugis auctor, qui inventor et ostensor.' Divinity is said to have been conferred on the gods for another reason, that of 'meritorum remunerandorum.' But the Supreme God is just. What sort of merits had these gods? The substance of what Tert. *ad Nat.* II. xiii. (text very defective) says is as follows. Saturn's human history shows what his descendants must

have been, mortal and earthly, with the concomitant circumstances of marriages, births, ancestral homes, kingdoms, and monuments. It cannot be denied that they who were born also died, and those who died cannot be held to be gods. In (*ibid.*) ii. 16 (text defective) Tertullian asks why the heathen who say the gods had made discoveries do not admit that the things were in existence before they were found? Why do they not rather honour the Maker whose gifts they are, instead of transferring their homage to the discoverers? Cato brought the green fig and Cn. Pompeius the cherry tree into Italy, but they have not been considered worthy of deification as the introducers of new fruits because they belong to present times. Lactantius, *Inst. Div.* I. viii. 8: 'No one is thoughtless enough not to recognise that those were mortals whom the ignorant and foolish dub and adore as gods. How, then, were they credited to be gods? one may ask. Doubtless because they were great and powerful kings, whose memory was consecrated on account of the merit of their valour, benefits, discoveries of arts, and so were precious to those whom they governed. If anyone questions this, let him consider their records and deeds, all of which the poets and ancient historians have preserved.' *Ibid.* I. xviii. 1: 'In this passage (of Virgil) they are refuted who deny that the gods were made from men, who praise and even glorify them, on account of their valour, as Hercules, of their gifts, as Ceres and Liber, of their discovery of arts, as Aesculapius and Minerva.' *Ibid.* I. xviii. 18–23: 'We proceed to the rest. The tradition of the gifts gave the name of gods to Ceres and Liber. I can show from Divine writings that the vine and fruits were in use by man previous to the progeny of Coelus and Saturn, but we pretend that they were invented by them.' Then Lactantius goes on to show that God has made these fruits and left it to man to find them. For the arts of medicine and of the smith Aesculapius and Vulcan have been deified. Then we should worship the first fuller, cobbler, and potter! But all these and other useful arts Minerva, no doubt, discovered!

The passage in Minucius, especially where the Latin is

given, is closely paralleled in those from Tertullian and Lactantius. One can scarcely believe Minucius to have indulged in compilation to the extent of going first to the *Apol.* and *ad Nat.* of Tertullian, then to have plundered three passages from Cicero (*de Nat. Deor.* I. xv. 38; II. xlii. 118, 119; II. xxiii. 60), and lastly to have supplemented from other authors. Minucius, says Agahd, on the contrary, found, if not all, yet a great part of his material put together in one writer (cf. Wilhelm, p. 52). Similarly Tertullian does not depend on Minucius, for he relates what is not in that author, *e.g.* about Liber, Ceres, Minerva (*Apol.* xi.), and about 'the regions in which the gods have left some traces of their work' (*Apol.* x.). Comparing the *Apol.* and *ad Nat.* together, the parallel passages show likenesses and differences of words which point to the same common source. *Apol.* x. speaks of the 'antiquitatum instrumenta' (antiquarian material) identifying the 'civitates' in which the gods 'nati sunt,' the 'regiones' in which they have left their mark and in which they were buried. *Ad Nat.* ii. 13 mentions their 'natales, patriae sedes, regna, monumenta,' and ii. 16 their being 'repertores.' The additions in *ad Nat.* are not accidental, as will be seen by comparisons with Minucius. These comparisons show that Minucius and Tertullian have adopted the sentiments of some Euhemeristic philosopher through a common source. Further, it is also clear that this was the same source from which they borrowed the fables about the gods. Agahd now turns to Lactantius. Has he added out of his own memory the examples of Hercules, Aesculapius and Vulcan, as 'repertores,' to the instances of Liber, Ceres, and Minerva, as the discoverers of fruits, mentioned by Minucius and Tertullian from the common source? He has not. For what he says (*I.D.* I. xviii. 1) is all of a piece with what he disputes about the same Hercules and Aesculapius in I. ix. 10, which, says Agahd, has been shown to come from the common source. These additional examples in Lactantius, therefore, have the same origin.

But who was the source of the common author? Wilhelm says that he was Varro, but Agahd denies Wilhelm's right

to say so. For Varro expounded Ceres, Liber, Vulcan, and Minerva physiologically (Aug. *de Civ. Dei* vi. 8; vii. 16). There is no trace extant to prove that Varro, in his *Rerum Divinarum*, fully accepted the dogmas of Euhemerus. Wilhelm declares that Augustine would show that Varro did follow the doctrines of Euhemerus, because the same Augustine is following Varro in *de C.D.* vi. 7, where it is said, 'What did they understand about Jupiter himself when they put him a nurse in the Capitol? Do they not bear witness with Euhemerus who wrote that all such gods were mortal men?' But this passage is only partly from Varro, who had related about Jupiter's nurse in the Capitol. We know this because Augustine declares that what he relates 'about the Epulones'[1] had been taught by Varro 'where he expounds the Capitoline laws.' The rest is only Augustine's own comment. He means: 'Do not the Roman citizens, who put the goat in the Capitol, agree with Euhemerus?' Varro himself could not have said such a thing. His attitude was entirely different from that of Euhemerus, and he was an adversary of that philosopher rather than a follower. Agahd therefore concludes that the source of the common author was not Varro, but some Greek writer of Euhemerist tendencies.

The Saturn myth is discussed in Min. xxi. 4–8; Tert. *Apol.* x.; *ad Nat.* II. xii.; and in Lact. *I.D.* I. xiii. 6–10. We have already seen that Tertullian makes a curious error in the citation of the four authorities for the history of Saturn in giving Cassius the cognomen of Severus. The conjecture that Minucius in adding 'in historia' to Cassius wished to correct Tertullian is put aside by Agahd, who believes that both authors are quite independent of each other. Lactantius owes nothing to either, for he writes 'Latini Nepos et Cassius et Varro.' The mistake of Tertullian is due to his use of the common author from whom all three have drawn, but Lactantius alone preserves what was actually read there. We confess that this explanation is not very convincing, as, amongst other things, it fails to

[1] The college of priests who superintended the banquets to the gods.

account for the consent of both Minucius and Tertullian in the rejection of Varro's name from the list.

The sources of the common author on Saturn now claim our attention. To begin with, Agahd is doubtful if Varro was consulted on the subject. Wilhelm, on the other hand, is disposed to believe that Varro was used by the common author and that the latter supplied Tertullian with his material. As for Minucius, the case is different, for he went directly to the *de Origine Gentis Romanae*, the author of which compiled from a lost expositor of Virgil, who in turn had gone to Varro. We are therefore led to the *Origo*, a commonplace little book, partly extant in two editions by B. Sepp, Munich, 1879 and 1885, containing 23 chapters on Roman antiquities from Saturn to Romulus. In its more complete form it was used in the Middle Ages by Paul the Deacon and Landolphus Sagax. Previously it had been through the hands of some schoolman of the fifth or sixth century. Its author, in its first form, has been thought to have abridged an unknown work of Verrius Flaccus, of the Augustan age ; but generally he is believed to have compiled from some unknown expositor of Virgil. Wilhelm maintains that Minucius obtained directly from the *Origo* (iii. 1) the rational explanation how Saturn came to be called the son of Heaven and Earth. Here is what it says : ' It is reported that at that period the simplicity of the men of old time was such, that when strangers endowed with counsel and wisdom came to them . . . being ignorant of their parentage and origin, they not only themselves believed that they had issued from Heaven and Earth, but also affirmed it to their posterity.' Minucius is nearer to the *Origo* than Tertullian in using ' rudes ' for the uncivilised Italians, and in the expression ' susceptus hospitio, multa docuit ' in his previous account of the activities of Saturn in Italy. Therefore both Minucius and Tertullian are independent and their likeness springs from Tertullian having used the common source on Saturn which drew from Varro as did the *Origo*. Heinze rejects Wilhelm's argument. There was no need for either Minucius or Tertullian to go elsewhere for the rationalistic conception of the Saturn myth, or for Minucius to go to the

Origo for such verbal expressions. It is all too commonplace. As a matter of fact the only point which Minucius has in common with the *Origo*, and which does not appear in Tertullian, is that Saturn was 'Creta profugus,' which in the *Origo* is 'regno profugus.' All the rest, continues Heinze, which is not in Tertullian was obtained by Minucius either from Virgil, *e.g.* that Saturn fled from his son's rage, or from his own knowledge, *e.g.* that Crete was the kingdom from which he had been driven, and that Jupiter afterwards reigned over Crete. Agahd, on the contrary, is certain that all that is said about Saturn in the corresponding passages of Minucius, Tertullian, and Lactantius is derived from the same common author, who agrees so accurately with what is found in the *Origo*, that he either drew from it or from the same expositor of Virgil which the author of the *Origo* used. For example, Minucius and Lactantius and the *Origo* agree in using the language of Virgil, *Aen.* viii. 321, 322, to explain the origin of the name 'Latium' as being derived from the fact that Saturn hid there. Lactantius and *Origo* use the actual lines of Virgil, while Min. xxi. 6 preserves traces of Virgilian language.

The most striking and important set of correspondences containing abusive stories of the heathen gods has previously been discussed in a quadruple comparison from the point of view which believes that there has been direct imitation between Minucius and Tertullian. Now we shall look at these stories from another angle and discuss whether they might have been due to the influence of a third author. The passages which will come into consideration are: Min. xxiii. 7 (xxii. 7); xxiv. 1–7 (xxiii. 1–7); Tert. *Apol.* xiv.; *ad Nat.* I. x.; II. xiii. and xiv.; Lact. *I.D.* i. 9 and 10; Clem. Alex. *Protr.* ii. 29, 30, 33, 35, 36. Wilhelm (p. 53 f.) argues that Minucius and Tertullian do not depend the one on the other but both on the same ecclesiastical writer. They differ so much between themselves that it is not possible that the one compiled from the other. Although they bring forward a great profusion of fables, mostly in the same order, with the same design, showing the vile way in which the gods have been treated in heathen literature,

yet Minucius alone records the Castors alternately dying, Hercules having been burnt up, Mars wounded and put to flight, the name of Briareus, Juno and the 'lorum' of Venus, Hercules cleansing the stables, Vulcan making lightning and the arms of Aeneas, and the adultery of Mars and Venus; while Tertullian alone shows Venus defending Aeneas, Mars bound for thirteen months, and Aesculapius described in Pindar as deservedly struck by lightning for avarice. The source of that common author from which both drew was Book I. of Varro's *Rerum Divinarum*, where mythical theology is treated of. Except for the ultimate attribution to Varro, Agahd (p. 40 f.) is in entire agreement with Wilhelm, while adding further material to the argument. It is evident that what Minucius and Tertullian each have, which is not in the other, did not come out of his own resources, since the same things are found in most of the Greek ecclesiastical writers, *e.g.* in Clement Alex. (*loc. cit.*) where, in addition to other examples, all is found that is peculiar to Minucius, except the mention of Briareus, of Juno and the 'lorum' of Venus, of Hercules and the Augean stables, and all that is peculiar to Tertullian. Turning to the *ad Nat.* Agahd maintains that the parallel matter therein also belongs to the common author. Tertullian expresses the same things in the same words in *Apol.* xiv. as in *ad Nat.* I. x.; II. xiii. xiv., so that he could not have written the one and have neglected the other. Yet he mentions examples in the one which are not in the other. In *ad Nat.* alone he relates the deeds and death of Hercules, the crimes of Jupiter, the origin of Aesculapius; and in the *Apol.* alone, Venus defending Aeneas from Diomede, Jupiter freed by a certain monster, Apollo's and Neptune's servitude. But Minucius has all these in great part except the crimes of Jupiter and the origin of Aesculapius, both of which, however, are found in Lact. *I.D.* i. 9, 10, and Clem. Alex. (*loc. cit.*) has parallels to most of the examples in question. This being so, those instances, found in the *ad Nat.* but not in the *Apol.*, also belong to the common author. Lactantius has drawn from the same source. He has much in common with Minucius and Tertullian, but is more copious and

extensive in narrating the fables, thus showing that he does not depend upon either. A further argument for a common source arises from the subject of Aesculapius in Tertullian and Lactantius. On the fables connected with him three authors are mentioned. Tertullian, *ad Nat.* II. xiv. 10, says that Socrates the Argive (a travel-writer) has reported that Aesculapius was baseborn, and it was uncertain who his father was. Lactantius, *I.D.* I. x. 1, informs us that Tarquitius,[1] in his *de Illustribus Viris*, discoursing on Aesculapius, says that he was the child of uncertain parentage, exposed, found by hunters, brought up on dog's milk, and reported to have been taught medicine by Chiron. Tertullian, *Apol.* xiv. 16, recalls that the lyric poet Pindar sings of Aesculapius, how he deserved death for his avarice, for he had harmfully practised medicine, and was punished by a thunderbolt. Both Tertullian and Lactantius give a similar account concerning Aesculapius, but Lactantius does not get his from Tertullian, as a different authority is cited in each case, and Lactantius has much more material. The likeness and dissimilarity spring from this, that each has used the same ' auctor communis ' who, on the subject of Aesculapius, had displayed the witness of Socrates the Argive conjoined with that of Tarquitius. Now what was the main source of all this collection of fables ? Wilhelm says that it was Varro, for two reasons. He compares passages in Augustine's *de C.D.* vi. vii., saying that here Varro was used. But Agahd replies that he has demonstrated that Augustine did not draw from Book I. of Varro's *Rerum Divinarum.* Wilhelm again points out that Varro is twice mentioned in *ad Nat.* I. x., on the prohibition of Egyptian deities in the Capitol, and as Varro the Roman cynic who introduced three hundred headless Joves (cf. *Apol.* xiv. end). Agahd replies that he shows (p. 54) that what Tertullian has at the beginning of *ad Nat.* is not from Varro but from the ' auctor communis.' That Tertullian again mentions Varro cannot warrant the conclusion that the Homeric fables about the gods are taken from Varro's

[1] Apparently this is Tarquitius Priscus, *c.* 150 B.C., an authority on Etruscan literature, whose writings probably had a Euhemeristic infusion.

Rerum Divin. because in that second place Tertullian must be referring to another work of Varro, the *Saturae Menippeae.* Wilhelm conjectures from Aug. *de C.D.* vi. 5 (cf. Cicero, *de N.D.* i. 16) that Varro might be thought to have displayed these fables, but if such were the case, why, asks Agahd, does the plentiful supply of them in the Latin apologists agree so accurately in example, word, and context with what is found in the Greek apologists who, on their part, clearly abhor those that are in Varro and Cicero? There is no answer. The conclusion must be that Varro cannot be thought to have furnished the apologists with these stories. The matter stands thus. In dealing with mythical theology Varro and Cicero have followed the same Stoic author, probably Posidonius [1] (see *Q.* iii. for fuller discussion). The ecclesiastical writers, however, both Latin and Greek, go back to some philosopher addicted to Euhemerus, which, at the last, Wilhelm himself saw. The common author watered his own garden from a Greek source, the same or similar to that from which Clemens Alex. drew. But to those things which he found there he added some from Latin writers, like the testimony of Tarquitius. Finally, Agahd disposes of Varro as a contributor to the common author by one more argument. It is inconceivable that Varro could have followed, as he did, in his exposition, the Stoic method of blaming the poets for their false teaching about the gods, and at the same time have been in agreement with Euhemerus, that he could have copiously related the deeds and slaying of Aesculapius and the doings of Hercules in their moral significance, and yet have believed that they were no gods at all, treading in the steps of Socrates the traveller and Tarquitius the history writer.

As might be expected the argument of Agahd has not at all impressed Heinze, who (p. 362) asks, are we really to suppose, for example, that Minucius had no knowledge of his own about the fables he alone records, such as Hercules

[1] Born *c.* 135 B.C. and died at Rome *c.* 51 B.C. He was head of the Stoic School at Rhodes where Cicero was instructed by him. Posidonius was a man of immense learning, a scientist, historian, and traveller, as well as a great Stoic philosopher. Fragments of his works have been collected by Bake, 1810.

cleansing the Augean stables, Vulcan the smith, and the adultery of Mars and Venus? In this comparison of fables, continues Heinze, the proof is particularly and manifestly clear that neither Minucius nor Tertullian drew them from a special source, but out of his own personal knowledge. It proves nothing for a common source that these universally known stories were also known to the Greek apologists. Moreover, in the tradition and diction of these fables, as seen in the comparison, there is nowhere any peculiarity whatever to make it feasible that they originated from one ascertainable tradition. So far Heinze. Others do not share his belief that the apologists had no special collection of fables in their hands. Eusebius, for instance, in his *Praeparatio Evangelica* [1] (Migne, *P.G.* xxi.) preserves considerable fragments of a work of Oenomaus of Gadara, a Cynic philosopher who flourished in Hadrian's reign or somewhat later. This is the *Goeton Phora*, or 'The detection of impostors,' exposing the oracles and ridiculing the gods. Harnack [2] suggests that Tatian and Minucius used this work.

For our own part, notwithstanding all that Wilhelm and Agahd have contended for a common source from which these scandalous myths were drawn, nothing appears to us to have weakened our argument that Tertullian imitated Minucius in his own version of them, whatever other source or sources he might have been able to go to.

The treatment of Homer and the poets in Plato's *Republic* provides the theme for another set of parallel passages in which may be compared Min. xxiv. 2 (xxiii. 2); Tert. *ad Nat.* ii. 7; cf. Justin, 2 *Apol.* ix.; Cicero, *de Rep.* IV. v. 5; *Tusc. Disp.* ii. 27; Plato, *de Rep.* p. 398 A; Aug. *de C.D.* ii. 14. Wilhelm (pp. 26, 27), comparing Minucius, Tertullian, and Cicero, notes that both Min. and Tert. leave out the anointing of Homer which Cicero, following Plato, mentions. Min. alone says that Homer was 'laudatus.' Therefore neither Min. nor Tert. follows one the other, nor

[1] Eusebius, *P.E.* v. 18–36, follows Oenomaus on the oracles. In vi. 7 he again quotes the same author on Fate.

[2] *Texte und Untersuch.* I. p. 218.

yet Cicero, but are indebted to a common source. Agahd adds (p. 65 f.) that the common author did not draw from Varro but from Plato directly. On the other hand Borleffs (*op. cit.* p. 232) considers that Min., who is nearer to Cicero, went to him at first hand, and that Tert. follows Min. Again Waltzing (*Musée Belge*, 1904) believes that Min. is nearer to Plato than is either Cicero or Tert., and has gone straight to Plato. On the hypothesis that the Platonic passages generally were drawn from a common Latin source which used Plato, Waltzing remarks that if this be the case it must be admitted that the author of the common source copied Plato directly and exactly, and that Min. has followed that common source to the very letter. But it is not necessary to assume that Min. copied from a problematical common source, for, Waltzing believes, Min. has read, studied, and copied Plato's *Phaedo*, *Timaeus*, *Symposium*, and *de Republica*.

According to Agahd (p. 65 f.) the passages on the domestic gods of the Romans revert back to the common author who particularly followed Varro in recording the times and laws of their consecration. Minucius (xxv. 8) enumerates the 'vernaculi dei' of the Romans, that is to say, Romulus, Picus, Tiberinus, Consus, Pilumnus, and Volumnus, together with Cloacina consecrated by Tatius, Pavor and Pallor by Hostilius, Febris by someone or other, while Acca Laurentia and Flora 'meretrices' should doubtless be added. Tertullian in *adv. Marcionem* i. 18 mentions Consus dedicated by Romulus, Cloacina by Tatius, Pavor by Hostilius. In *Apol.* vi. and *ad Nat.* I. x. he reports that foreign, that is Egyptian, gods were excluded from the Capitol, giving, in *ad Nat.*, Varro as his authority. Then, in *ad Nat.* he refers to the 'domestici dei' without naming them. In *Apol.* xiii. he mentions Larentina 'scortum' as being worshipped. In *ad Nat.* II. ix. Tertullian says that Varro classified the Roman gods in two divisions, the 'incerti' and the 'electi.' Then Tertullian makes his own classification, mentioning Romulus, (II. x.) giving the disreputable history of Larentina the 'scortum' in connexion with Hercules, and referring to Volumnus, Pavor, Consus, and

many others. Lactantius, *I.D.* i. 20, is very copious on the ' propriae Romanorum religiones,' mentioning, amongst other deities, Larentina and Flora the harlots, Cloacina consecrated by Tatius, Pavor and Pallor invented and worshipped by Tullus Hostilius, and Febris. Augustine, *de C.D.* vi. 10, supplies a fragment (xxxiii.) from the *contra Superstitiones* of Seneca, who says that Tatius dedicated Cloacina, Romulus dedicated Picus and Tiberinus, and Hostilius dedicated Pavor and Pallor. In iv. 23 Augustine repeats the list, adding Febris (cf. Cicero, *de N.D.* iii. 63), who is also mentioned in ii. 14 and iii. 12.

Agahd concludes from Aug. *de C.D.* iv., where he several times praises Varro as an authority, and from the passage in iv. 23 parallel to Minucius, that what the latter says goes back through the common author to Varro. The four passages in Tertullian come ultimately from Varro and represent a fusion from that author. In reference to the Egyptian gods Tert. *ad Nat.* I. x. expressly calls Varro to witness. What is said in Lactantius is drawn from Varro but perhaps from other authors as well. It must therefore be Agahd's belief that Seneca also drew the passage in his *contra Superstitiones* (or *de Superstitione*) from Varro, otherwise we should have to refer Minucius directly to Seneca, as do Schwenke and Burger. Whether Tertullian has condensed and amplified Minucius at the same time, as Schwenke set out to show, is another argument.

One of the passages in Greek authors on which Minucius and Tertullian may be suspected of depending, considered by Wilhelm, is Justin M. on the Cross, 1 *Apol.* lv. (Wil. pp. 60–63). Tertullian, says he, has used Justin in so many places in the *Apol.* and *ad Nat.* that Ebert, Hartel, and Harnack have rightly concluded that he had Justin before him and turned him to his own use (p. 59). With Minucius, however, it is different. He may have read Justin, but no one has maintained that he has used him in composing the *Octavius*. He has followed in the steps of some Latin apologist who has used either Justin or the writer whom Justin followed. Tertullian, notwithstanding that he has gone directly to Justin in some cases, has done the same.

Another important set of passages deals with the heathen sacred rites and mysteries. Compare Min. xxx. 3 f.; xxiii. 1 f. (xxii. 1 f.); Tert. *Apol.* ix.; *ad Nat.* II. vii.; Lact. *I.D.* I. xxi. 1 f.; Cicero *de Rep.* III. ix. 15. Wilhelm argues thus. Minucius and Cicero agree in mentioning King Busiris in the account of the practice of human sacrifices among the nations, and, as conjoined with the others, this example is found nowhere else. It is conceded that in this case, but in this alone, Minucius did know Cicero's *de Rep.* But whence did Minucius obtain his example of Jupiter Latiaris? He did not derive it from Cicero, nor could he have done so from Tertullian, because, in the context, where Minucius speaks of Saturn 'devouring' his children, he is verbally nearer to Varro (in Aug. *de Civ. Dei* vii. 19) than is Tertullian, who says that Saturn 'did not spare his own sons.' But Minucius was not directly following Varro in this passage, since it is too much to suppose that he was using three authorities at once, Cicero, Varro, and some ecclesiastical writer, all in so small a space. In Tertullian the example of Busiris is wanting, which, by itself, seems to establish that he was ignorant of Cicero. But he was not dependent on Minucius, because the other examples common to Min., Tert., and Cicero, viz. of the Poeni, Galli, and Tauri, are found in other authors besides, *e.g.* in Plutarch's *de Superstitione*, xiii.; nevertheless, there is nothing to show that Tertullian used Plutarch. It is true that Tertullian knew the similar work of Seneca, but the latter is not his authority here. But did Tertullian use Varro? He mentions a point found in Varro (in Aug. *de Civ. Dei* vii. 19) which does not occur in Minucius, viz. that the Gauls sacrificed the 'maior aetas' (the 'maiores' in Varro). Varro, according to Augustine, does admittedly attribute the Gallic sacrifices to Saturn, while in Tertullian they are to Mercury, but Augustine may have wrongly reported Varro, as it is related nowhere else that Saturn was among the Gallic gods. But it does not follow that Tertullian copied Varro, because these examples of human sacrifices among the Poeni, Galli, and Tauri are, as we have seen, also found elsewhere. Moreover, they are conjoined

with the case of Jupiter Latiaris, which is found only in ecclesiastical literature (*e.g.* Justin, 2 *Apol.* xii.[1]; Tatian, *Oratio*, xxix.; Theophilus, *ad Autol.* iii. 8), except in Porphyrius *de Abst.* ii. 56. Neither did Tertullian draw his material about Jupiter Latiaris from Minucius, since he is both fuller in detail and clearer in statement. It is therefore probable that Tertullian took what he said about Jupiter Latiaris from some Christian apologist, and from the same source also the passage on human sacrifices among the nations. Wilhelm concludes that both Minucius and Tertullian contain echoes of Varro, and have drawn from an unknown writer who followed in the footsteps of Varro.

Agahd (p. 59 f.) refers the passages in Min. (xxiii. 1) and in Lact. (*I.D.* i. 21) on the Isiac mysteries, in which Osiris or Serapis is annually lost and found and found and lost, to the common source, in spite of the possibility of their being taken directly from Seneca's *contra Superstitiones* (quoted in Aug. *de Civ. Dei* vi. 10). On the whole of the parallel material generally, he argues that there must have been a common source, since Minucius and Tertullian agree and disagree in what particulars they give or do not give, while Lactantius not only supplies more sacred rites but also speaks more fully about them. With regard to the sources of the common author these partly included Varro. To Varro belong the examples of the Banquet of Hercules (Tert. *ad Nat.* II. vii.), and the throwing down of men from the Milvian bridge in honour of Saturn, for which latter Lact. (*I.D.* i. 21) cites him. It is uncertain whether what Min. says (xxx. 4) about the sacrifice of a Greek man and a Greek woman, a Gallic man and a Gallic woman, should be attributed to Varro. But the collection as a whole by no means belongs to Varro. For instance, on the human sacrifices in Gaul, Varro (in Aug. *de Civ. Dei* vii. 19) says that they were to Saturn, and Augustine, affirms Agahd, has reported Varro rightly. On the other hand, Min. and Tert. say that the Gallic human sacrifices were in honour of Mercury. This is what the common author said. To Varro certainly cannot belong the instances of the sacrifice of

[1] Where also Saturn is conjoined with it.

infants to Saturn at Carthage up to the time of Tiberius (Tert. *Apol.* ix.), and the human sacrifices to Jupiter at Cyprus up to the time of Hadrian (Lact. *I.D.* I. xxi. 1). A second source of the common author was Pescennius Festus [1] on the African sacrifices above mentioned. Lactantius (*I.D.* I. xxi.) shows that he was the authority on this subject, saying that Pescennius Festus in his history reported that the Carthaginians were accustomed to sacrifice human victims to Saturn. To Pescennius also it must be agreed to refer the account in Lact. of human sacrifices to Jupiter at Cyprus. In the third place the sources for the Greek sacrifices were probably Greek. Finally, on the sanguinary rites of the Asiatic Bellona (Min. xxx. 5 ; Tert. *Apol.* ix.), which were contemporaneous, the common author drew from his own knowledge.

These examples will be concluded with another from Wilhelm, who compares Min. xxxiv. 11 ; Tert. *Apol.* xlviii. ; and Theoph. *ad Autol.* i. 13 on the analogies in Nature to the Resurrection (pp. 68–73).

Min. has no special agreement with Theophilus, except on the analogies of seeds and the trees. But while Theophilus says that the seeds die in the earth, Min. says that they are ' corrupted.' Each has more analogies which the other has not. Schwenke is sure that Min. cannot have taken this passage from Theophilus. No more can Tertullian be thought to owe his material to Theophilus. He has distant resemblances on the seasons and the fruits, and he agrees with Min. on the corruption of seeds. Like Min. he omits the argument of Theophilus from the body's recovery after illness. Tert. is not the source of Min., since the latter speaks of the flowers, shrubs, and trees which are wanting in Tert. Nor is Min. the source of Tert., for the latter speaks of the seasons, which are wanting in Min. As for the passage in which Ebert (p. 375) thinks that Tert. has embellished Min. on the corruption of seeds, saying, in addition, that when rotted they spring up in greater fruitfulness, here Tert. is very like Theophilus, who writes : ' A seed of

[1] His date has not been fully explored, but has been put as late as the third century by some.

wheat, for example, or of other grains, when cast into the earth, first dies and rots away, then it is raised and becomes a stalk of corn.' There is, however, no passage in Min. or Tert. strong enough to warrant the opinion that either followed in the steps of Theophilus, especially as the argument for the Resurrection from the analogy of Nature was such a favourite with the ancient Fathers.[1] But Min. and Tert. have sufficient resemblance to Theophilus to show that they followed a Latin apologist who turned either the passage in Theophilus, or one like it, to his own use.

The effect of the common-source hypothesis, if true, would be to leave Minucius and Tertullian, not to speak of Lactantius and others, only the meanest shreds of originality, and to destroy all the arguments from literary comparison in the priority discussion at one fell swoop, so that it would be necessary to depend upon historical considerations alone for the determination of the date of Minucius. But can the theory of Wilhelm and Agahd be accepted, at any rate in full? To begin with, very few beyond its authors have accepted it,[2] while most scholars, like Monceaux, Massebieau, Harnack, Heinze, Geffcken, and Waltzing, have remained unconvinced. The position is that no proof of the existence of a Latin 'communis auctor' is serious enough to raise it above a conjecture, which, moreover, must be said to lack probability. Such a Latin Christian author of the second century must have been important to be copied by writers of the calibre of Minucius, Tertullian, and Lactantius so extensively. How could the latter, especially, have failed to mention him when he enumerates the apologists who have preceded himself (*I.D.* V. i. 21)? Jerome, who was so anxious to preserve the memory of ancient Christian writers, has not the slightest suspicion that there was an old apologist who preceded all the Latins. He had, therefore, disappeared entirely without leaving a trace before the time of Lactantius. This would be very difficult to believe.

[1] Cf. Clem. Rom. *ad Cor.* i. 24; Tert. *de Resurr.* xii.; Ambrose, *de Exc. Frat. sui Sat.* ii. 54 f.

[2] *E.g.* Valmaggi, ed. of Min. Fel. Pref. 21; and Manaresi, *L'imp. Rom. e il Crist.* 1913, p. 262.

Even if the hypothesis is accepted it does not account for the special characteristics of the resemblances between Minucius and Tertullian in which the one has indubitably copied the other, *e.g.* the charge of cannibalism against the heathen who ate the flesh of beasts which had devoured men in the arena (Min. xxx. 6; Tert. *Apol.* ix.), the comparison of everlasting hell-fire with that of lightning and volcanoes (Min. xxxv. 3; Tert. *Apol.* xlviii.), both ideas found nowhere else in the early apologists, the double error in transcription made by Tertullian in citing Cassius the historian, and his curious failure to go on with the discussion of heathen rites (*Apol.* xiv.). The complete comparative study of F. X. Reck might be described as a sufficient refutation.[1] Finally, since the very means which is supposed to resolve the question of the relation of these two apologists itself remains an insoluble puzzle, the last state is worse than the first. Nevertheless it is necessary to guard oneself well from too hastily rejecting in any sense all that has been said for the common source. Although on the one hand a collection of similarities coupled with dissimilarities in writers, covering ground which may have been occupied informally for a long time, may very easily be made to appear attractively in favour of a single common written source, yet on the other hand, when the priority of two related apologists is in question, the stigma of imitation may as easily be attached to details which are found to be the mere commonplaces of apologetics. The studies stimulated by the search after this old and hypothetical writer have caused the whole relationship of the early apologists, both Latin and Greek, to each other to be more thoroughly investigated, and from them has come out the proof, not of a common Latin or even Greek source, but of a common tradition, which had its roots in the first preaching of the Christian faith in the Gentile world. During the time that St. Paul was arguing in the 'schola' of Tyrannus, probably a converted sophist, at Ephesus, the accomplished Greek as well as Hebrew educated apostle must have found it necessary

[1] 'Min. Fel. und Tert.' in *Theol. Quartalschr.* 68 (1886). Note such passages as those on pp. 95, 97, 100, 105.

to develop an anti-heathen polemic which, combined with his positive teaching, would have contributed to his remarkable success in Asia (Acts xix. 9–10). After the lapse of about a century we find Justin M. keeping a school as a Christian philosopher at Rome. The lectures to his pupils must have been largely of an apologetic character. The heathen philosopher Crescens answered him, probably in his own academy, not at all sorry, we may be sure, to have a new peg on which to hang his disquisitions, and a fresh impulse to attract the audience who paid him his fees. The heathen schoolmasters, too, would occasionally find need to confirm their pupils in the old religion and to warn them against the innovators. Thus both sides would prepare their cases, a state of things which eventually produced the *Octavius*. But in the meantime, before Justin composed his two Apologies, a ' corpus disputationum ' would have been accumulated, a collection of apologetic material for the oral instruction of hearers and converts, written down first in Greek and afterwards in Latin, and circulated among the scattered Christian communities, but not put into any special literary form until the apologists conceived the idea of drawing upon it for the purpose of formally presenting Christianity to the heathen, whether in defence or for propagating the faith. All these somewhat hackneyed conventionalities were doubtless familiar enough to Minucius and Tertullian, as they were to the Greek apologists, and herein consists their family likeness in so many places. When, however, those correspondences are approached which are so literal as to exclude an intermediary, even the hypothesis of a common and informal tradition cannot disturb the conclusion reached in the previous chapter, that Minucius served as a model for Tertullian.

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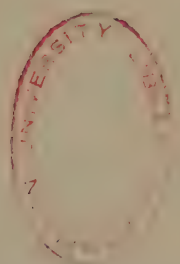

Printed in England at The Ballantyne Press
Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co. Ltd.
Colchester, London & Eton